THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND SPECIAL CONTEST!
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GAME Player's PC STRATEGY GUIDE™

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January 15, 1991

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FOUNTAIN OF DREAMS
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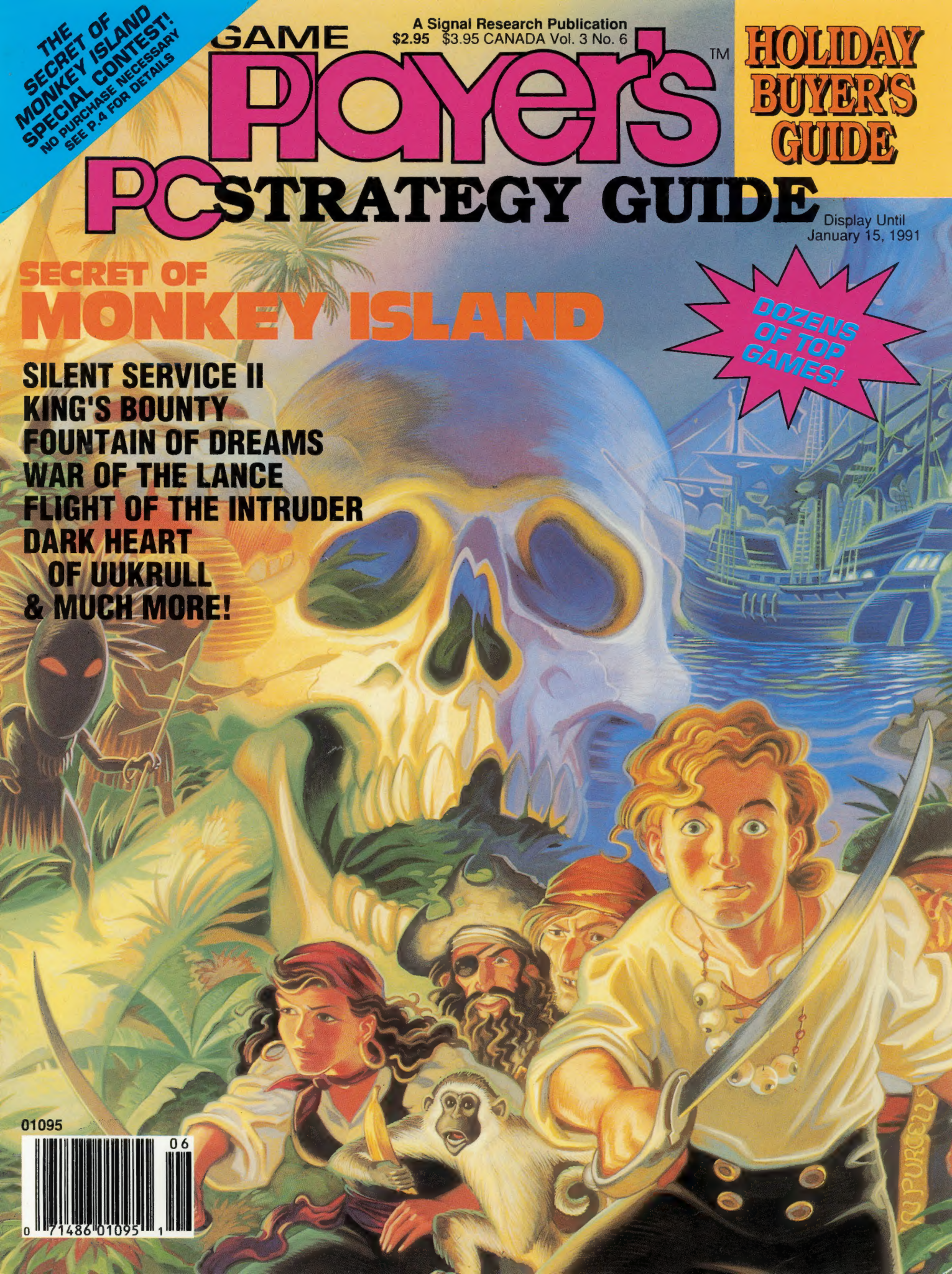

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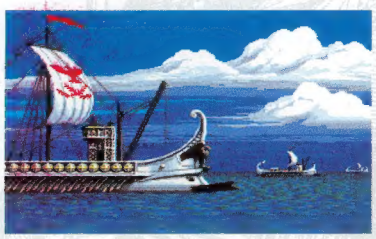
• *Kellyn Beck on* •

THE S·E·C·R·E·T·S OF CINEMATIC ADVENTURES

Let's go back in time. All the way back to about 275 BC. Civilization exists only in small pockets like Rome, Greece and Egypt. The rest of the world is a vast terra incognita, peopled with strange and dangerous barbarians. You are a young Centurion, sent with your legion to subdue marauding tribes of the Alps.

What would such an adventure be like?

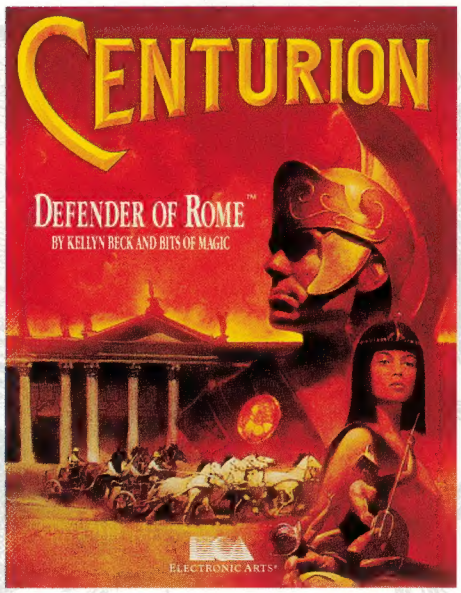


That's the premise of Centurion: Defender of Rome™, a new cinematic adventure, where you don't just watch the story unfold, you **control the action**. You'll race chariots in the Circus Maximus, sail fleets of ancient warships across the Mediterranean, compete in gladiator shows in the Colosseum, seduce the voluptuous Cleopatra and lead Roman legions into battle at the edge of civilization.

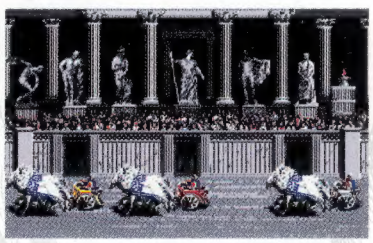
Egyptus
Infatuated with the Egyptian queen, you tarry in Alexandria until finally you gain entrance to her bedchamber on her barge. Cleopatra is as sharp-tongued as ever.
"Does the mighty conqueror seek another conquest? Is the land of the Pharaohs not enough to satisfy you?"
Warm
Sarcastic

In Centurion, rich images of a time long ago are brought to life with cinematic techniques. I began exploring the uses of cinematic techniques in Defender of the Crown™ and Rocket Ranger™. But as great as these early cinematic adventures LOOKED, they lacked the addicting involvement and interactive levels of great computer games. The "cinematic" part was complete. The "adventure" part was in its infancy.

The cinematic adventure has finally grown up. We used every last one of our secrets in making Centurion. It's all there: great graphics, cinematic editing, strategy, and depth of gameplay that players now demand.

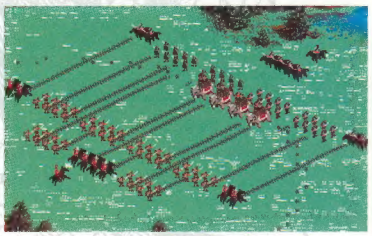


Take Centurion's chariot racing scene. We planned out every scene the way a filmmaker would shoot it. You see your chariot enter the Circus Maximus and pass in front of a packed grandstand. The "camera" cuts to an aerial shot of the track and zooms in for a close-up of your chariot. Suddenly the race begins. You hold the reins as you charge around the track, whipping your opponent and trying to shatter his chariot.



We even added a fully-orchestrated musical soundtrack. We asked award-winning film composer Jon Newton to work his magic with sound boards. The pounding drums and blaring trumpets bring out the drama of each event.

But we wanted to go beyond cinematic appeal. We wanted to create an environment that's different each time you play, one that doesn't have the usual pre-determined path. Like our land battle. You control the action and create your own winning strategies. You direct the movement of each infantry and cavalry unit. You send your general into the fray to bolster your troops' morale. Retreat. Charge ahead. Outflank. Even form a wedge. But your enemies are "smart" and unpredictable. They'll adapt to outwit your previously successful strategies and present you with new challenges each time you play.



Cinematic graphics and great game play. This is what makes Centurion the first complete cinematic adventure.

It took my group, Bits of Magic and Electronic Arts® three years to bring the epic world of Centurion to life. I sincerely hope you'll enjoy your journey back in time to the world of ancient Rome. (Here's one last secret: Save the Parthians for last. They can tear you to pieces.)

ELECTRONIC ARTS®

2 WAYS TO ORDER: 1) Visit your retailer. 2) Call 1-800-245-4525 with VISA/MC, USA or Canada, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Pacific Time. IBM, Tandy and compatibles. $49.95 (3.5" available). Screen shots represent IBM version. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Incorporated. Tandy is a registered trademark of the Tandy Corporation. Defender of the Crown and Rocket Ranger are trademarks of Cinemaware Corporation.

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Here are just some of the hottest new computer games designed for use with the Ad Lib Music Card:

Sierra's Conquests of Camelot

Lucasfilm's Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain

Activision's Power Drift

Electronic Arts' Centurion

Capstone's Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

Three-Sixty Pa… Sands of F…

System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.

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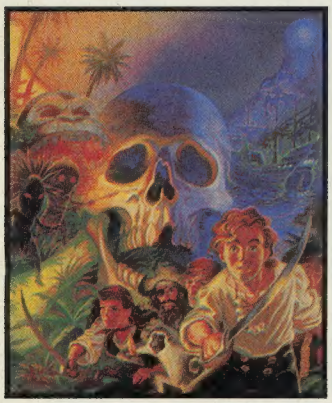
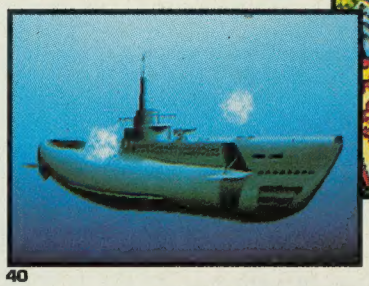


COVER

The Secret of Monkey Island from Lucasfilm

DEPARTMENTS

30



40

60

12

4
EDITOR'S NOTES

COVER STORY

12
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

A special look at a very special new adventure from Lucasfilm. *Monkey Island*, with its world of buccaneers, lost treasure, cryptic maps, and mysterious legends, gets complete treatment this month.

SUPER STRATEGY

20
HEART OF UUKRULL

30
KING'S BOUNTY

40
SILENT SERVICE II

50
WAR OF THE LANCE

COLUMNS

60
ALTERNATE LIVES

Fountain of Dreams takes you into a not-so-pretty future — Florida after the holocaust — and achieves new heights for RPGs.

62
THE DESKTOP GENERAL

Here's everything you always wanted to know about war games — a look at the best contemporary book on the subject.

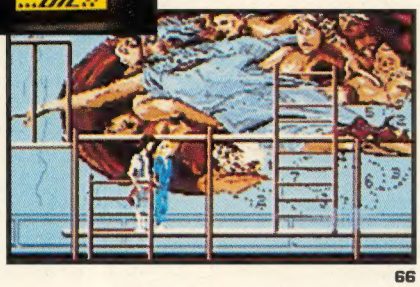
CONTENTS

FEATURES

70

20

74



66

64
VIRTUAL REALITY

What was it like to be a U.S. naval pilot in Vietnam? *Flight of the Intruder* gives you an authentic look.

REVIEWS

66
BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

70
THE PUNISHER

74
QUESTMASTER: PRISM OF HEUHEUTOTOL

78
SANDS OF FIRE

SPECIAL SECTION:

80
BUYER'S GUIDE

A guide to the latest PC games — just in time for the holidays.

96
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GAME Player's™ PC STRATEGY GUIDE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1990

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MPA

EDITOR'S NOTES

MONKEY ISLAND TREASURE HUNT!

Welcome to the November/December issue of the *Game Player's PC Strategy Guide*, which contains not only a Buyer's Guide to the latest and best PC games on the market, but also in-depth coverage of Lucasfilm's humorous, swashbuckling graphic adventure, *The Secret of Monkey Island*. This new game was created by Ron Gilbert, author of such previous hits as *Maniac Mansion* and *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*.

Not only is *The Secret of Monkey Island* a great game, but there's also a great contest to go along with it. We're pleased to be able to help sponsor Lucasfilm's "*The Secret of Monkey Island* Treasure Hunt." The grand prize is a Caribbean cruise, with hundreds of other prizes as well — Ad Lib sound cards, *Monkey Island* tee-shirts and posters, and *Game Player's* subscriptions.

You can enter the contest by playing an interactive sample of the game that's supplied on special demo disks available from Lucasfilm. You walk through the demo, then answer the questions that appear at the end. Go through the demo as many times as you like until you get the answers. Then write the answers on a piece of paper, along with your name, birth date, address, and phone number, then pop it in the mail to *Monkey Island* Contest; P.O. Box 10228; San Rafael, CA 94912.

You can get the demo in specially marked boxes of 3M diskettes, or you can send a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer to *Monkey* Demo; P.O. Box 10228; San Rafael, CA 94912.

Good luck with the contest, and enjoy this issue!

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Executive Editor

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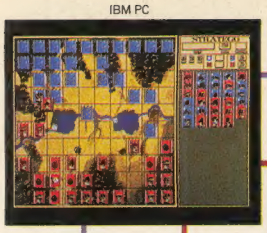
IBM PC

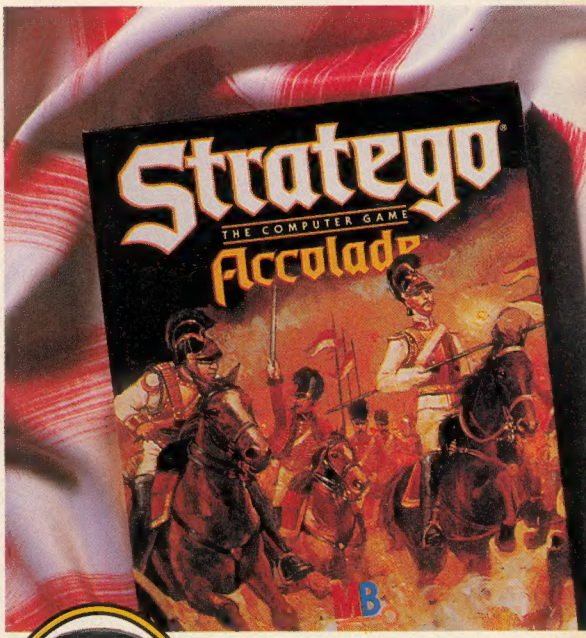


Enjoy three game boards: original, classic and modern. Stratego has single battle or 5-battle campaigns — even digitized sounds.

"The greatest battlefield strategy game of all time."

War &

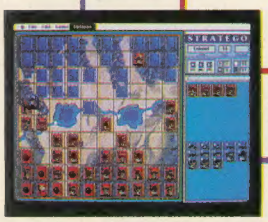
"Anyone over age 10 will love new Stratego."



The intensity of combat. The serenity of stones. Two diverse philosophies of gameplay that share a common bond—superlative strategy. *Stratego*® captures all the thrill of the classic battlefield board game from Milton Bradley. Now, there are more options, choices and features. Deploy your army, plan your advance, attack and capture the enemy flag. One match against the computer, and you'll see why *Stratego* is called "the greatest battlefield strategy game of all time."

Ishido™ summons forth *The Way of Stones* and returns it to the world after thousands of years. This ancient game and beautiful puzzle recalls

Play Traditional and Tournament rules, including Silent Defense, Aggressor Advantage and Rescue. Comes with multiple piece sets.



MAC II

Play the computer with 5 levels of ability from sergeant to field marshal. Select from a library of battle formations or make your own.

MAC II

Actual game screens from IBM PC and Mac II

Stratego © 1990 Milton Bradley Co.
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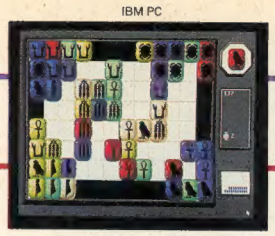
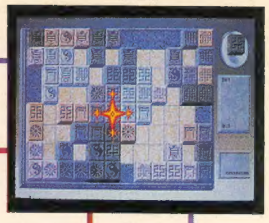
IBM PC



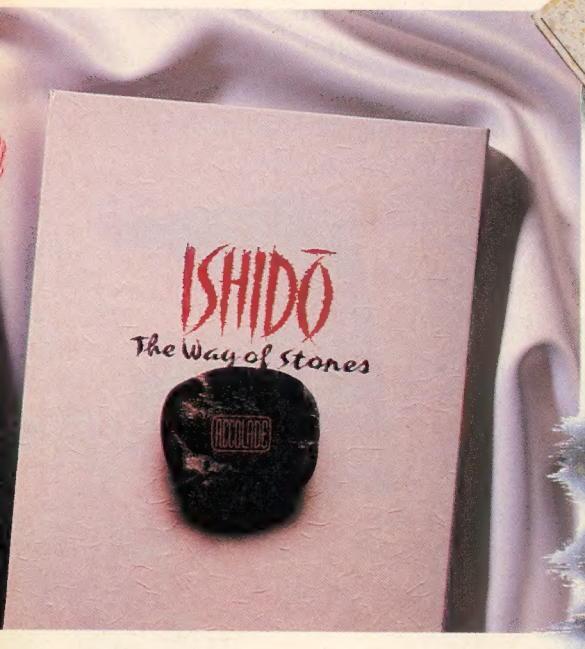
Play a power game to amass points and compete against the clock. Play for elegance, meditating over each move like a true master.

MAC II



See if you can empty the pouch and discover the secret of 4-Ways. Let the oracle reward you with answers to your innermost questions.

Peace



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—PC GAMES

As you merge with Ishido's many possibilities, you'll discover why, to some, The Way of Stones is more than just a game.

MAC II

versions of the game. Other versions may vary.
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Amsterdam, Netherlands.

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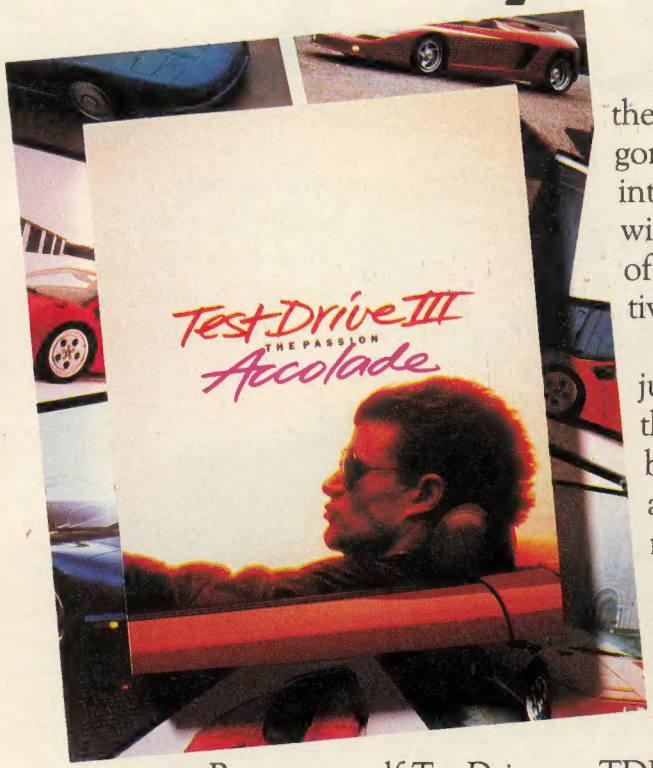
Futuristic and fast. Chevrolet's prototype CERV III is packed with down-the-road engineering and punch. 0 to 60 mph in 3.9 sec.

Hurry. They're



New features include night driving, bad weather, working headlights and wipers, Instant Replay and a 360-degree Chase Car view.

Brace yourself *Test Drive* fans. *Test Drive III: The Passion*™ is unleashed.

It's totally new. Totally hot. And it'll totally blow the doors off of any driving simulation on the market.

Test Drive III's advanced synthesis of bit-mapped and polygon-fill graphics, plus digitized interiors, provides the racer with an unprecedented sense of speed, realistic road perspective and performance.

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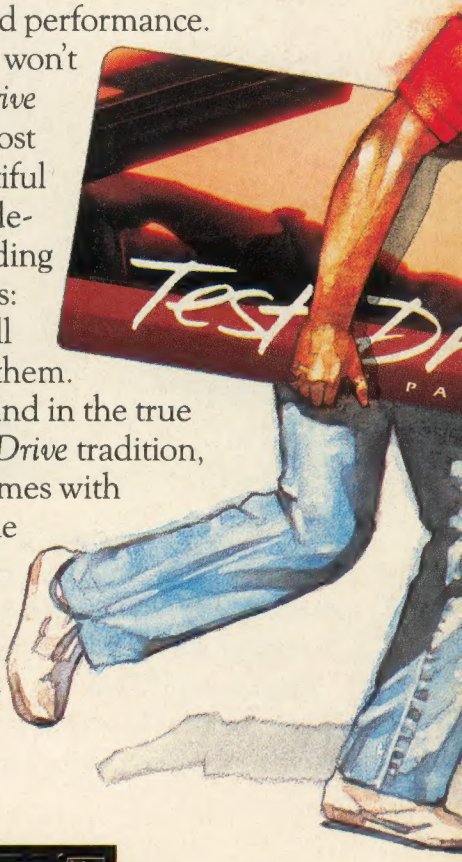
And in the true *Test Drive* tradition, TDIII comes with incredible cars.

Settle into the futuristic cockpits



Race head-to-head against the computer on branching roads that offer cross traffic, long tunnels and ocean straightaways.

Digitized dreams. Race sleek and sexy prototype sports cars through the most detailed and graphically "real" world of any driving game.

Actual game screens from IBM PC/VGA
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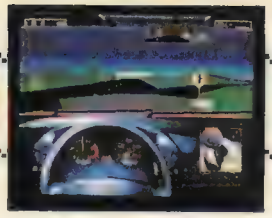
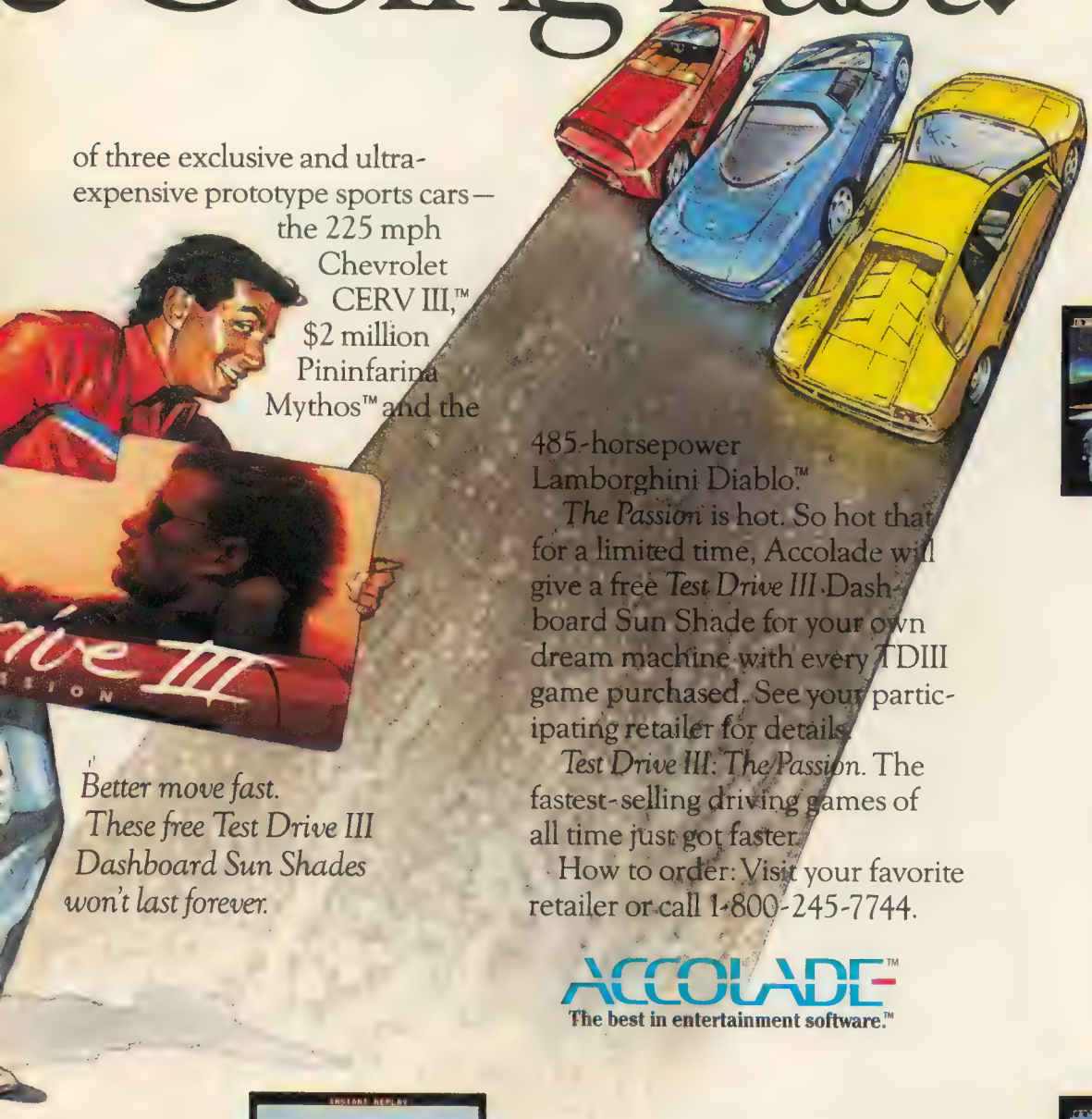


Unmatched realism. TD III allows you to spin your car in reverse, drive back the way you came, take multiple routes – explore!

COMING SOON!
TDIII add-on disks, containing both scenery and cars.

e Going Fast.



of three exclusive and ultra-expensive prototype sports cars—the 225 mph Chevrolet CERV III,™ $2 million Pininfarina Mythos™ and the 485-horsepower Lamborghini Diablo.™

The Passion is hot. So hot that for a limited time, Accolade will give a free *Test Drive III* Dashboard Sun Shade for your own dream machine with every TDIII game purchased. See your participating retailer for details.

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Blow by some oceanfront property at 200-mph plus. Feel the CERV III hug the highway. It just doesn't get any better than this.

Relive your greatest crashes on Instant Replay or check out your driving situation on the 360-degree Chase Car view with variable Zoom.

sion of the game. Other versions may vary.
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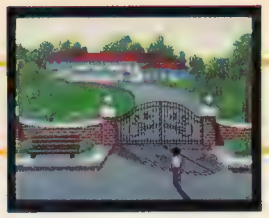
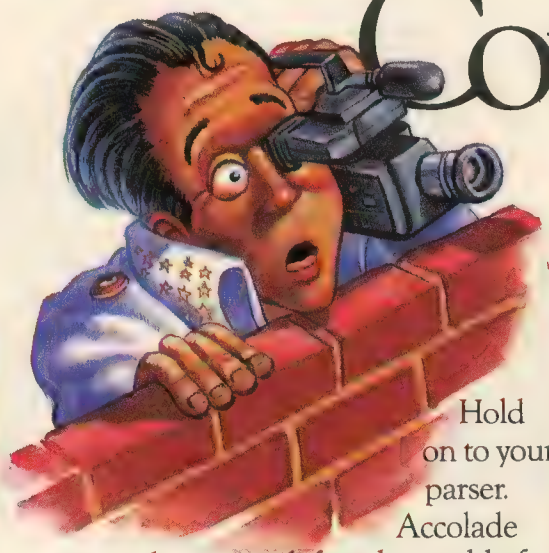
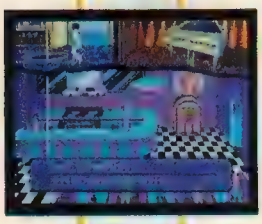
"He Ain't Nothing But a Corn Dog." Can a man who wears polyester slacks and "Alf" pajamas impress the stunning Stella Hart?



"Heartbroke Motel?" Help Les Manley solve engaging puzzles. See genuine felt paintings. Animation so real your hips will gyrate.

CAUTION: The Contain Gra





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"I Want a Hunk Of Burnin' Les." Just one of the beautiful babes our hero Les Manley could stumble upon. Got any cocoa butter?

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version of the game. Other versions may vary.
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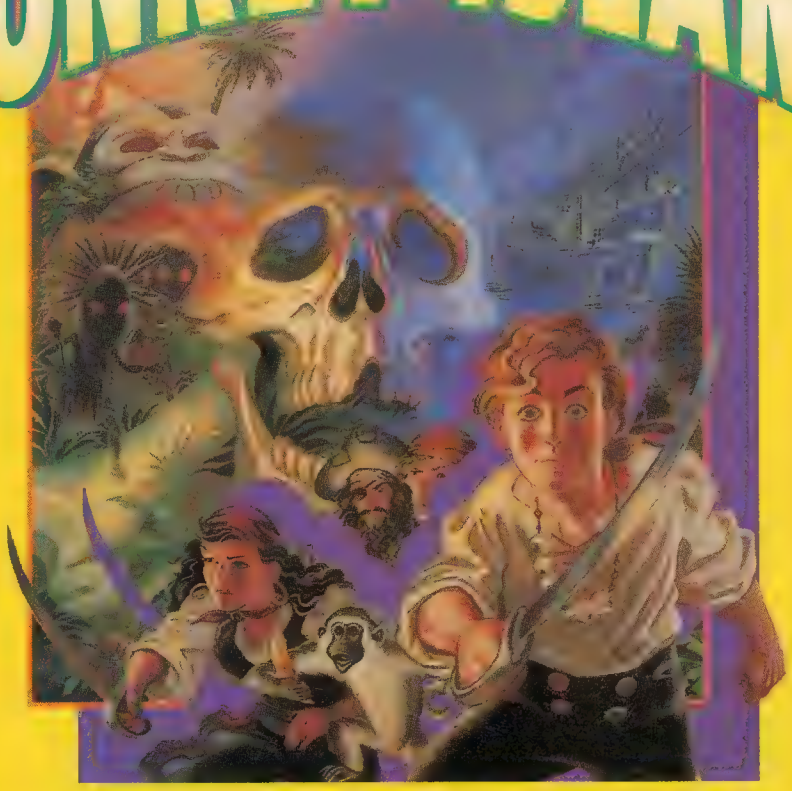
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND



Leslie Mizell

Have you always secretly wanted to swash your buckles? Do you buy a certain pirate-endorsed cereal just for the nifty decoder rings and Jolly Roger patches? Congratulations! You're a buccaneer in the making. And *The Secret of Monkey Island* might just finish your training.

In this new **Lucasfilm** interactive graphic adventure, you're young Guy Threepwood, a pirate wannabe. You've chosen the marauders of Melee Island to be your mentors. But there's one catch — none of these pirates is willing to sail the high seas, much less pillage or loot. They're all scared stiff of a stiff — the ghost-pirate LeChuck, whose spirited ship still rides the waves of the Caribbean. So the pirates swill grog in the local tavern while the treasures of the world go un-plundered, the armadas of the seas go un-molested, and the lasses of the country go un-kissed.

Find out about LeChuck by talking to the drunken pirates, then chat with the important-looking pirates in the back room to learn what tasks you must complete before the scalawags will take you under their wing. The three trials they assign — becoming a master swordsman, discovering the lost treasure of Melee Island, and stealing the Idol of Many Hands from the Governor's Mansion — must be completed before you can leave the island.

No sooner do you fulfill your tasks than you find that every pirate on the island has flown the coop. LeChuck is on the rampage again, and this time he's kidnapped lovely Elaine, the only governor who makes your heart beat faster.

You must scramble to buy a ship, assemble a crew, and follow LeChuck to Monkey Island. Your goal on that isle is to find the key to the Monkey Head Temple. Somewhere in the caverns beneath the temple is LeChuck's ghost ship — and your one chance to stop LeChuck from marrying Elaine.

Designed by Ron Gilbert, who introduced players to the wacky worlds of *Maniac Mansion* and *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*, *Monkey Island* keeps the outrageous sense of humor of those games, but is more accessible to players. Not only do events progress in a more logical sequence, but Gilbert has added the dialogue choices first found in Lucasfilm's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* to the company's familiar "point-and-click" interface. The result is a faster-moving game with more action, less curser-moving — and if you combine that smoother game with the 256-color version soon to be available, you've got the best Lucasfilm game ever.

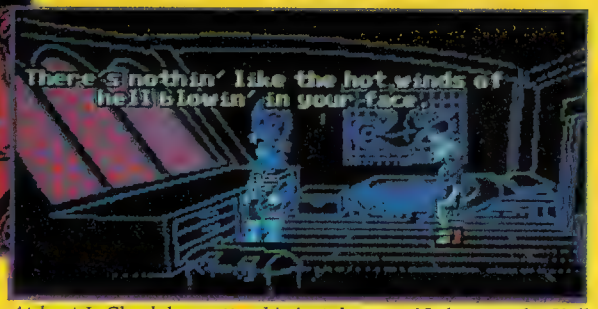
Monkey Island also continues to reward those people who have played other Lucasfilm games by lacing the action with references to *Loom* and *Indiana Jones* (and, of course, Chuck, that perennial Lucasfilm character). It's truly a perfect family game of nonstop fun: All that's required is a knowledge of what to do when you're handed a rubber chicken with a pulley in the middle.

The lookout of Melee Island is blind as a bat, so don't rely on him for information regarding LeChuck's ghost ship.

Some of the pirates may put down their grog long enough to give you some plot background, but it's the important-looking pirates in the back room who'll get you started on your life of piracy.

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick optional; mouse recommended; supports sound boards.

So where is this Monkey Island? You won't find out until much later in the game.



At least LeChuck has gotten his just desserts. Unfortunately, Hell hasn't improved his disposition — he's ready for revenge, and his plans include Governor Marley.

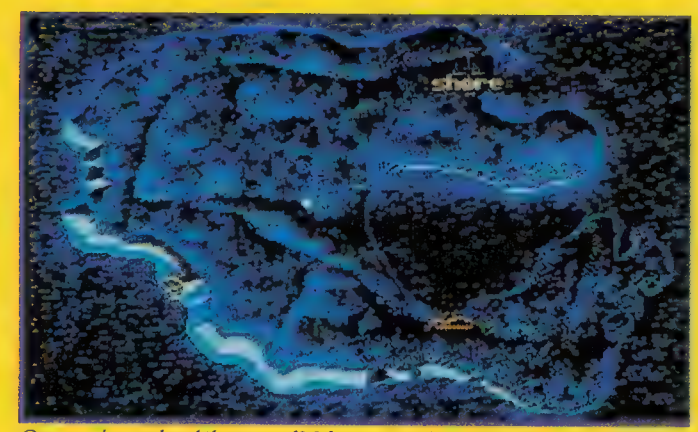
Once you have some money in your pocket, return to this citizen of Melee and purchase a map from him. Don't worry if you don't know Sven — your barber is close enough.

The fortuneteller won't give you much information, but you can pick up a useful item in her shop. Those rubber chickens seem to be pretty popular — and there's one in here you can pick up for free.

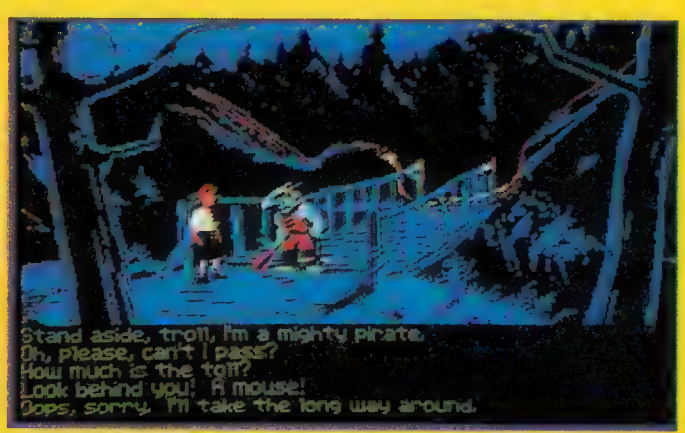
How can you stand to be near this vermin?
Do you guys know the sneaky-looking man on the
opposite corner?
Say, are you guys pirates?
I'll just be running along, now.

Flatter the pet rat belonging to these guys and you might end up a little richer than you were before. Invest the money in something for your halitosis — and that of the pirates around you.

The sole occupant of the Melee jail has nothing to do but gossip — but you'd better have a breath mint if you want to chat with him. His rat-flavored breath is fierce.



Once you've explored the town of Melee, you can investigate the rest of the island. There's still plenty of activity on the paths after sunset.


Stand aside, troll, I'm a mighty pirate.
Oh, please, can't I pass?
How much is the toll?
Look behind you! A mouse!
Oops, sorry. I'll take the long way around.

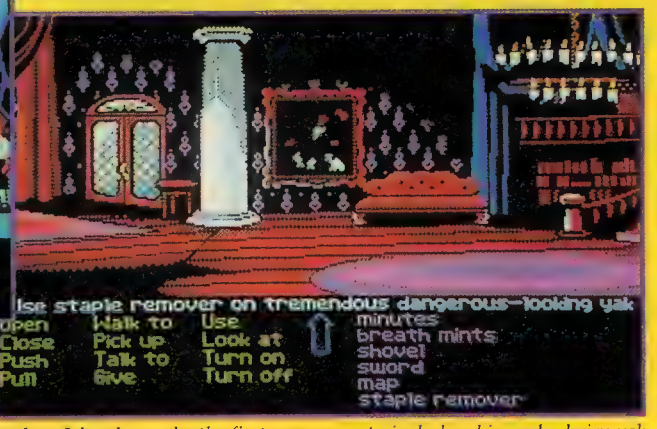
You must bribe the troll with something frivolous before he'll let you cross the bridge. Mystery readers shouldn't have any trouble coming up with the right "false clue" to give him.

You can pick up some money by taking a risky job with the circus. The Fettucini Brothers pay their human cannonballs well, but you'd better have a makeshift helmet if you're to survive your short, memorable trip.

I'm Bobbin Threadbare. Are you my mother?
I'm a pirate, cannonball-head. Who are you?
Excuse me, but the sign said there were restrooms in here?
Whoops! I just realized that this is the wrong house.

Meathook has been a near-hermit ever since LeChuck ruined the tourist industry. He'd probably jump at the chance to destroy LeChuck — and he could keep everyone amused with his neat tatoo trick.

If you listened carefully to the important-looking pirates, then you should have no trouble getting past the piranha poodles. But if you didn't....

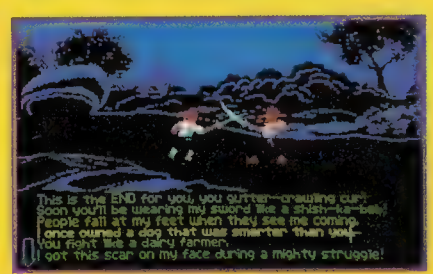


Monkey Island *may be the first game ever to include a big, ugly, hairy yak wearing wax lips. It's too bad that, along with the other interesting inhabitants of the Governor's Mansion, you never get to see it.*

How did a woman this beautiful get into politics? The sight of lovely Governor Marley renders you practically speechless. You might want to rely on your non-conversational skills to impress her.

As in all good treasure hunts, X marks the spot. But as the Melee Island Chamber of Commerce points out, you should leave a little treasure for the other would-be pirates.

Smirk not only teaches you swordsmanship skills, but he also reveals the key to all good pirate fencing matches — a good insult.


This is the END for you, you gutter-crawling cur.
Soon you'll be wearing my sword like a shish-kebab.
People fall at my feet when they see me coming.
once owned a dog that was smarter than you.
You fight like a dairy farmer.
I got this scar on my face during a mighty struggle!

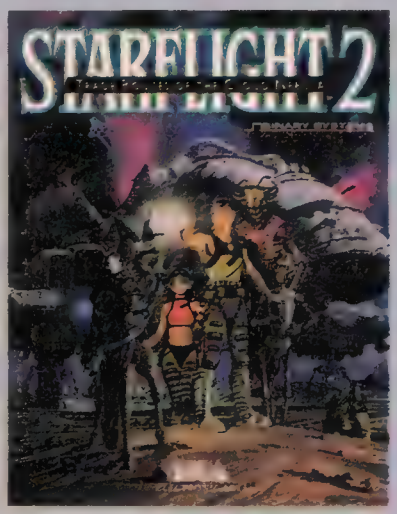
After you've studied with Smirk, practice your new skills on the pirates who roam Melee Island. You won't be ready to face the master swordsman until you have an answer for every insult.

BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP, BUT SPACE GOES ON FOREVER.

This is the bumper sticker I slapped on my starship. But I'm the captain, so who says I can't make a statement to my fellow merchants? Besides, it's true. In the vastness of space, there's plenty of room for genuine ugliness. I run into *lots* of aliens — spineless blobs like the Spemin, bizarro mystic broccoli like the Tandelou — that make me shudder and reach for the nearest can of industrial-strength pesticide.

So why do I do it? So I can cop an intellectual toaster and slice and dice some phantom in the nebula? Do I give a flying fungus?

I guess I really do. The planet Arth needs fuel and technology to withstand a Spemin *blob-literation.* So rather than vegetate before the T.V., I talk to vegetables in space and trade with bug-eyed aliens that resemble the hairy mold growing in the shower. And I remind myself: Life is no beauty pageant.



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"The world of Starflight 2 is one of the most colorful worlds ever crammed into a computer... It's a great sequel to a great game." — *Computer Gaming World*

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To oblivion? Or to the heart of the Spemin mystery?

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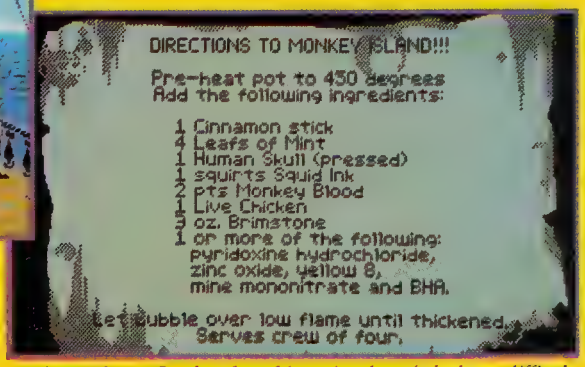
Carla's barbs are slightly different than the average buccaneer's — but with a little imagination, you should find a properly biting reply among your list.

Even at Stan's cut-rate prices, you won't have enough money for a ship until you secure a letter of credit from the shopkeeper in town.

You've barely gotten your feet wet when your scurrilous crew turns mutinous. It looks as if your ship isn't going to Monkey Island unless you figure out a way to get there.


DIRECTIONS TO MONKEY ISLAND!!!
Pre-heat pot to 450 degrees
Add the following ingredients:
1 Cinnamon stick
4 Leafs of Mint
1 Human Skull (pressed)
1 squirts Squid Ink
2 pts Monkey Blood
1 Live Chicken
3 oz. Brimstone
1 or more of the following:
pyridoxine hydrochloride,
zinc oxide, yellow 8,
mine mononitrate and BHA.
Let bubble over low flame until thickened.
Serves crew of four.

You're no Betty Crocker, but this recipe doesn't look too difficult. Best of all, the ingredients all seem to be readily available — in one form or another.

There's got to be an easier way to travel! Whatever happened to little wooden rowboats?

Since Monkey Island is larger than Melee Island, it's more difficult to explore. Be careful — unfriendly fowl seem to be waiting for you to get lost.

Everything you need to blow up the dam can be found in the fort near the volcano. Dropping the gunpowder on the dam is the easy part — now what do you have that could ignite the powder?

You need those bananas, but the fruit is all-too-fiercely guarded by the fine young cannibals of Monkey Island. You'd better make friends with them if you don't want to end up as tonight's main course.

THE ANSWERS YOU NEED

FILL OUT AND MAIL IN THE SUBSCRIPTION CARD TODAY

Maybe you can find an item worthy of trade on a quick jaunt to the Monkey Head Temple. Since there's not much of a choice, your decision shouldn't be too difficult.

The caverns underneath Monkey Head are full of illusions, so it helps to have a trained professional with you. Even a long-dead navigator is better than nothing.

Follow the navigator's directions carefully, and don't head anywhere if he hasn't given his nod of approval.

If you follow the navigator's instructions, you'll find LeChuck's ghost ship in record time. But you'd have to be practically invisible to search the ship without being noticed.

The cannibals' valuable root is hidden in the ghostly livestock room. Grab the root quickly — and try not to notice the animals' disgusting eating habits.

Great! You returned the root to the cannibals and got some of their exorcism potion, only to find out you're too late to stop the ship from sailing back to Melee Island.

A spritz of potion, and it's bye-bye ghost. Now hurry up and get to the church on time.

You're hot on the trail of LeChuck. But will you be in time to stop his wedding to your beloved Elaine?

GP

Read the Editor's Notes in this issue for information on *The Secret of Monkey Island* Treasure Hunt!

J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Lord of the Rings™ Vol. I

Experience the Excitement and Wonder of Tolkien's Middle Earth!

"Interplay's newest role-player tackles the Tolkien trilogy with top-flight graphics, sound and a new play system that should make adventuring in Middle Earth more realistic than ever before."
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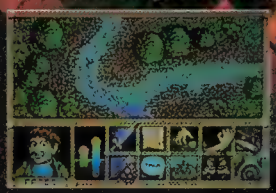
Interplay Productions presents the first role-playing computer game encompassing the epic fantasy world of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. Players journey through a world inhabited by hobbits, elves, dwarves, and wizards, falling in and out of the clutches of wolves, wargs, trolls, orcs, and ghosts, all the while protecting the one true ring from falling into the grasp of the evil Lord Sauron and his Dark Riders.



IBM screens pictured.

"Resplendent graphics and loving attention to the Tolkien lore prove that in The Lord of the Rings, Interplay is out to forge one ring game to rule them all!"
–Computer Gaming World

Combining the best elements of role-playing and graphic adventures, The Lord of the Rings, Vol. I uses stunning full screen, top-down, 256 color VGA graphics, smooth four directional scrolling, digitized sound, an easy to use point-and-click icon interface, and an off-line paragraph system to bring the depth of the true Tolkien experience to life via the computer.

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To order The Lord Of the Rings, Vol. I, call 1-800-969-GAME. Available on MS-DOS for $54.95. Amiga coming soon.

The program is published with the cooperation of the Tolkien Estate and their publishers, George Allen & Unwin (publishers) Ltd. The plot of The Lord of the Rings, the characters of the hobbits, and the other characters from The Lord of the Rings are © George Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd. 1966 1974 1979 1981 © 1990 Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. MS-DOS is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

Inside a sanctuary, the party can recuperate, store items, and advance in skill levels. You can also back up your games here.

The Dark Heart of Uukrull

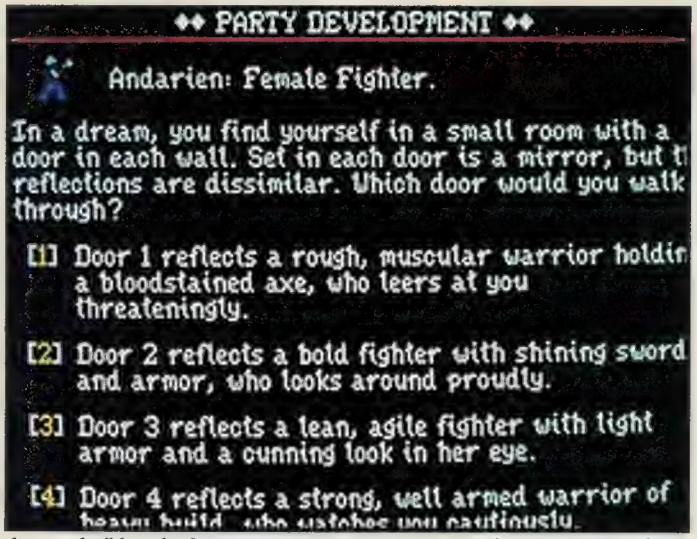
NEIL RANDALL

The Dark Heart of Uukrull is an example of the newest kind of role-playing game. Easy to start and quick to learn, these games nevertheless take a long time to complete and keep progress, experience points, and wealth to a minimum. Though primarily concerned with playability, they nonetheless refuse to sacrifice realism. In some ways, in fact, they are much more realistic than the older and more complex games.

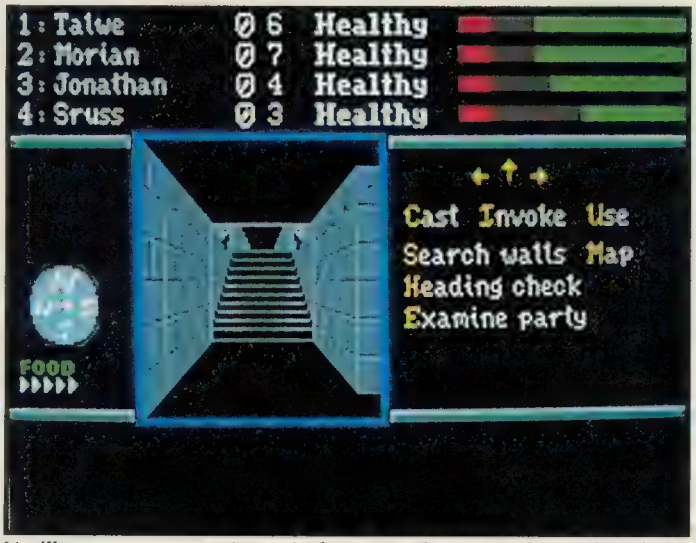
Although you can save games in *Uukrull*, this **Broderbund** game alters character and situation data at every important event, saving the game automatically when those events occur. No longer, then, are you encouraged to save your position, then try something foolhardy just to see if it works.

Uukrull, like other recent games (see the "Alternate Lives" column in this issue), demands that you think about the situation as realistically as possible. Yes, you can leap down into the seemingly bottomless pit, but don't expect to do so without committing your entire game to the act.

Actually, *Uukrull* doesn't go as far in this regard as recent releases, since you can back up your current game whenever you visit a sanctuary in the mountains. Then if your party is killed, you can restart from that point. This system is extremely satisfying because it lets you reverse your actions without actually encouraging you to do so.


◆◆ PARTY DEVELOPMENT ◆◆
Andarien: Female Fighter.
In a dream, you find yourself in a small room with a door in each wall. Set in each door is a mirror, but t reflections are dissimilar. Which door would you walk through?
[1] Door 1 reflects a rough, muscular warrior holdin a bloodstained axe, who leers at you threateningly.
[2] Door 2 reflects a bold fighter with shining sword and armor, who looks around proudly.
[3] Door 3 reflects a lean, agile fighter with light armor and a cunning look in her eye.
[4] Door 4 reflects a strong, well armed warrior of

As you build each character, you must reply to a series of questions. Your characters' personalities are determined by your answers.



You'll encounter many staircases in the game, and your party has no choice but to follow them.

Occasionally the party will find one of these pits in the floor. Be careful, because you don't know where they'll lead.

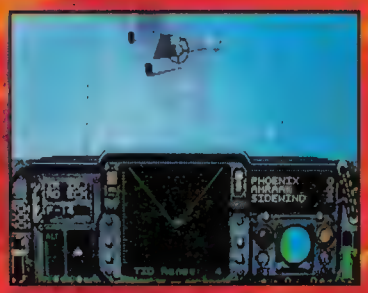
ERIOSTHE'S LAST CHANCE

The Dark Heart of Uukrull is a fantasy role-playing game in which you start with and maintain a party of four adventurers — a fighter, a paladin, a priest, and a magician. Your task is to explore the city of Eriosthe and destroy the evil Uukrull.

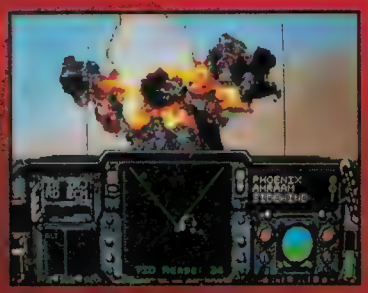
The once-beautiful city of Eriosthe used to extend into the West, far beyond the mountains into which it was built. However Uukrull, one of the Ancients, defeated his former allies and shut off Eriosthe from the West. Now, as he builds his strength, his goal is to wage war against the entire Western world.

Eighteen months ago, the City Council sent an extremely

DOGFIGHT WITH DAREDEVILS



Rugged dogfighting action. Roast a MiG with your lock-on Sidewinder or Phoenix air-to-air missiles When it's up close and personal, unload with TOMCAT's M61A1 Vulcan cannon.



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F-14 TOMCAT. The only F-14 air combat simulation for MS-DOS® computers.

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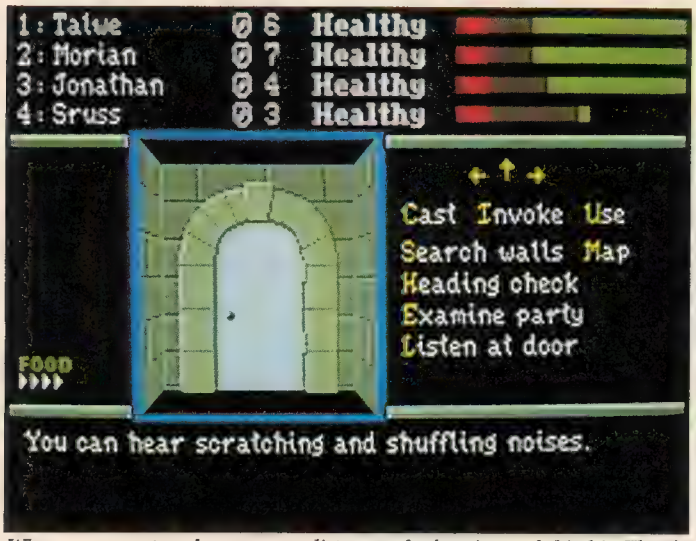
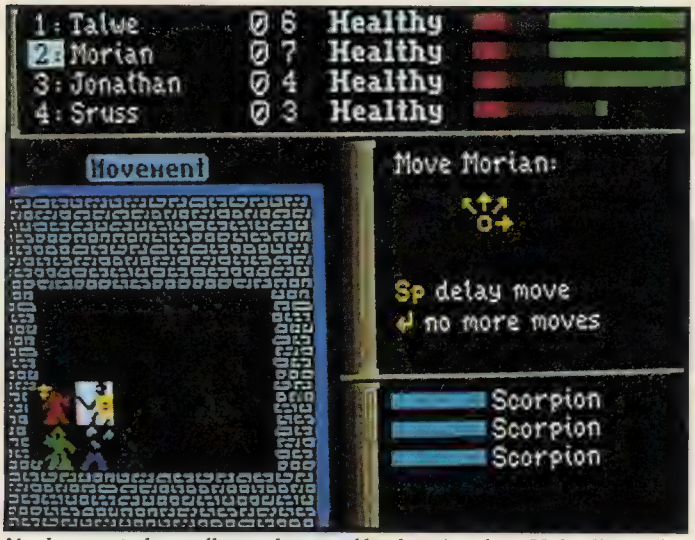


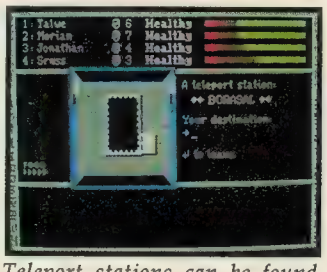
When you come to a door, you can listen to what's going on behind it. There's something ominous here — but not especially frightening.



You have control over all your characters' battle actions from Uukrull's *combat display.*

powerful party of councilors to battle Uukrull. When this party failed to return, the council developed a radical plan: Assuming that Uukrull was expecting the previous attack, the council will send a smaller, seemingly less powerful party in hopes of reaching Uukrull unnoticed. You are to lead that party into the mountains.

You've gained some important experience points in this battle, but two of your characters are poisoned and will have to be cured.



Teleport stations can be found throughout the city. Use them to leap from sanctuary to sanctuary, and to other places as well.

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1990 ORIGIN Systems, Inc.

As your party progresses, your experience, strength, intelligence, and wealth all increase, and your priest and magician develop greater magical skills. But at the beginning of your adventure, you can proceed virtually unchallenged — except by those pugilistic denizens who just don't want you around.

You can find several very important places in the marketplace. You can be healed or cured here, but you must be resurrected elsewhere.

EASY TO LEARN, A LIFETIME OF PLAY

What sets *Uukrull* apart from other role-playing games is its manageability. From the moment of character creation through the many tactical battles you must fight, the game system never stands between you and the choices you'd like to make. Yes, you must read the manual to understand how the magic system and other features work, but most of the game system can be learned without resorting to the manual. The majority of the commands are there on the screen, and you can usually guess the rest.

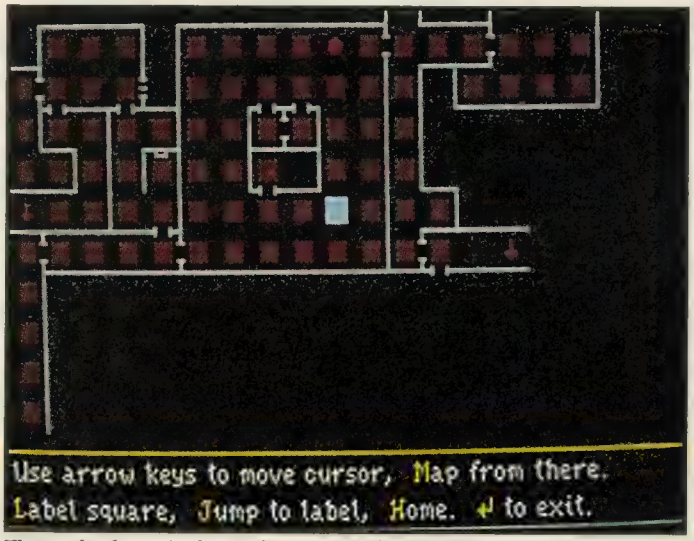
Like games in the *Wizardry*, *Bard's Tale*, and AD&D series, *Uukrull* gives you a first-person view of the land as you explore it. At the top of the screen, a series of bars shows the status of each of the four characters in your party. A compass and other information (as it becomes available) appears on the left. Available actions from which you conduct the game are listed on the right. The bottom of the screen is devoted to a message window.

The screen changes whenever you meet an enemy. The first-person graphic shows the creature, while the right side offers negotiation or other choices. If battle occurs, the screen is replaced by a combat screen from which you can control the actions of each of your characters.

You can let the computer fight weak opponents, but you should command battles against serious challengers

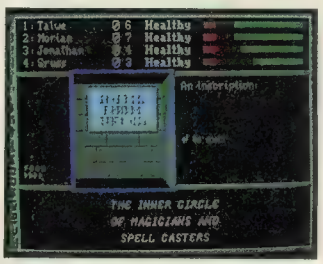
1: Talwe 06 Healthy
2: Morian 07 Healthy
3: Jonathan 04 Healthy
4: Sruss 03 Healthy
The Guild:
♦ Paladins ♦
1 meet Abjal-Dorr
2 meet Suras
3 meet Vapress
↵ do nothing
FOOD
Vapress shakes his head. His blond hair falls in a crown around his handsome face. He looks healthy and very strong. "Let me join your party. Let me fight for

The guild is also in the marketplace. Go inside to talk to adventurers who may be called on to replace any party member who's been killed.



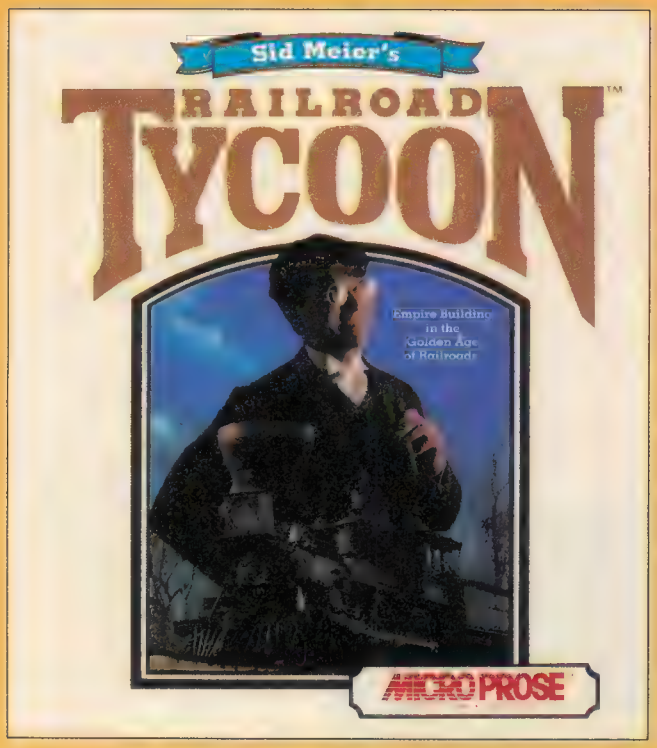
The overhead map is almost always available. Since it traces your route, it's an invaluable aid in tracking your progress.

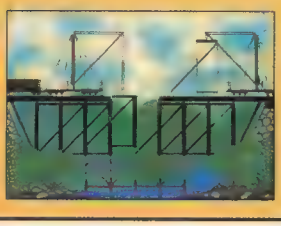
You can purchase food, weapons, and armor at Sildar's. The armor display shows that he has a wide variety of items at varying prices.



Signs like this one are scattered throughout the city. Sometimes the signs look like obscure treasure maps.

The Best of Times





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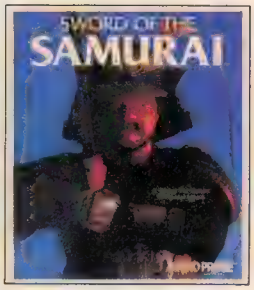
Dogfighting is the name of this game. No experience? No problem: just turn on all the rookie options and you'll be up to your eyeballs in dazzling graphics and furious fun.



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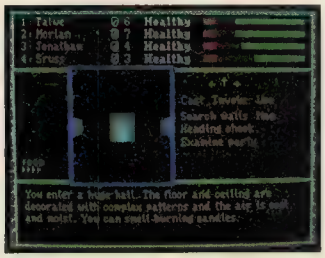
yourself. Battles are often tense and exciting, and they are fairly quick as well. Injured characters lose hit points, while magic-users who cast spells lose magic points. You can regain both, either by returning to a sanctuary or by simply wandering around for awhile.

Characters who die can be resurrected by taking them to the mausoleum. The problem is that the longer the body is dead, the less chance the priests have of resurrecting it. If you lose a character permanently, the neighboring guild can provide a replacement.

About 60 spells are available to the magicians and priests, ranging from siphoning mind-powers from other creatures at the high end of the scale to casting firebolts at the lower end . You must have translation spells to decipher codes, and healing spells to avoid a return to sanctuary every time you get hurt. Furthermore, you need rings to cast any spells at all — and some of these must be found lying about. Advancement in magic is slow, so you'll appreciate any spell you can learn.



The message at the bottom of the screen tells all. Be careful here — sorcerers are everywhere.

1: Talwe Ø 6 Healthy
2: Morian Ø 7 Healthy
3: Jonathan Ø 4 Healthy
4: Sruss Ø 3 Healthy
Circle of Magicians:
Consult the archives
↵ to leave
FOOD
Sruss is awarded a ring of Iron in the arkana of Frost.

This is great! Our magician has a new ring, which means he'll be able to learn additional, more powerful spells.

There's a shrine inside this temple. Unless you know what spell to cast or what name to invoke, it might be best to leave it alone.

Uukrull has another interesting feature: The actions and logistics make sense. Not only are rooms and corridors large enough to accommodate the creatures who inhabit them, but the creature population isn't overwhelmingly huge. The city of Eriosthe exists on several levels of the mountain, and stairs, consequently, are everywhere.

Your food supply is handled simply but effectively. You must keep stocked up on provisions so you can keep your strength up with a proper diet.

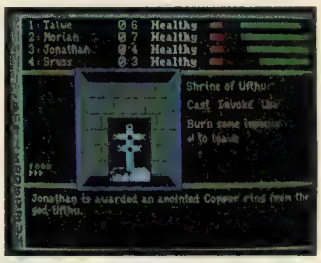
Finally, side missions which you must undertake are located throughout the city. These mini-quests are all important to your overall advancement, but many of them are little more than distractions.

Rarely do you find yourself trapped, and this feature too is welcome. You simply make your way through the city, undertaking the side missions and easing toward your ultimate confrontation with Uukrull.

SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY!

Eriosthe contains 13 ancient sanctuaries built deep in the city. Each sanctuary has a western door to take you back the way you came, an eastern door that leads to the next set of dangers, and a teleport door for instant travel between areas.

Each sanctuary is also a resting place, representing the end of a level. Here your skill



The priest of your party, Jonathan, worshipper of the god of the underworld, has been granted a copper ring, which gives him additional power.

Introducing Total Reality

This 256-color, true-to-life golf simulator gives you unprecedented 3D graphics...so realistic—*so advanced*—you'll think you're on the course.

It's a beautiful Spring morning as you prepare to tee off. You select your #1 driver (ignoring your caddy's wisecrack)...take a practice swing... adjust your stance...and drive one *right down the middle* for 290 yards. As you approach your second shot, you notice *every* detail of your surroundings... the location of each tree...the contour of each hill and slope...the lay of the ball...

A day on your favorite course? Not quite, but it's the next best thing. *LINKS...The Challenge of Golf* is a totally realistic golf simulator that's a quantum leap ahead of any computer golf game you've ever seen.

You'll control your game to the degree you prefer...from defaulting to the standard swings...to adjusting your stance, backswing, acceleration, power and snap. With every drive and putt, your ball will act according to the *true* laws of physics.

And you'll experience all the sounds of a real tournament...from commentary...to caddy's remarks...to the swoosh of the swing...click of the drive ....and bloop of the ball in the water.

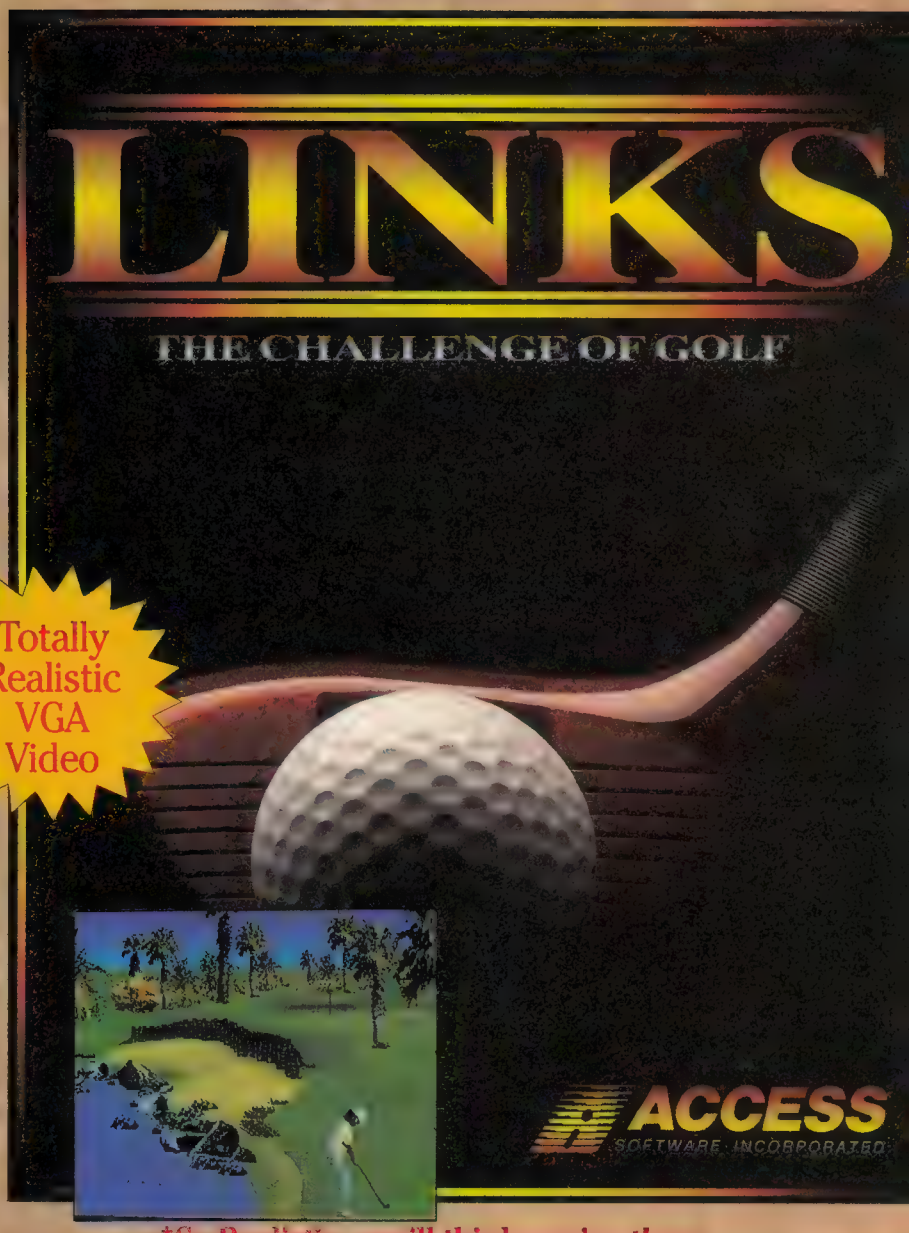
LINKS also includes a practice area for driving, chipping and putting.

3D Terrain

LINKS is brought to you by *Access Software*... the same fanatics for accuracy and realism who gave you World Class Leader Board Golf—*and the graphics are unbelievably realistic.* Gone are square-edged screens that look like Lego blocks. With *LINKS,* hills actually look like hills, trees look like trees, water looks like water. (And, yes, golfers even look like golfers.) In fact, *LINKS* uses graphics technology so advanced that a VGA system is absolutely required for play.

Experience the next generation of golf simulators. Reserve a Tee Time with *LINKS.*

We guarantee you'll absolutely *love* it—or your money back!



*So Realistic, you'll think you're *there*

LINKS features totally realistic 3D terrain...combining stunning *256-color,* 3-dimensional terrain graphics with *Real Sound*™, the revolutionary technology that gives you astonishing digitized sound effects *without hardware.*

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The problem with the temple areas is that they have some really creepy inhabitants. Here's a trio of skeletons hoping to include you among their future colleagues.

1 : Talwe Ø 6 Healthy
2 : Morian Ø 7 Healthy
3 : Jonathan Ø 4 Healthy
4 : Sruss Ø 3 Healthy
Sanctuary URLUSAM:
Cast Invoke Use
Rest to recuperate
Skill levels
Open cache
Examine party
Leave sanctuary
FOOD
Talwe needs 2365 to make level 4
Morian needs 295 to make level 3
Jonathan needs 433 to make level 3

Back in Urlusam, the party rests. The list of experience points shows how many are needed to advance each member to the next skill level.

and attribute levels are automatically upgraded, and you can store items to be picked up later. From the teleport exit you can instantly return to a previous sanctuary, but can't advance to one you haven't visited.

Other teleport stations exist outside the sanctuaries, and as long as you've reached them you can always use them, so be sure to write them down. Using the teleport doors, you can zip from area to area and avoid fighting your way back to a place you've already cleared.

Uukrull also has a helpful automatic-mapping feature. In all areas except certain mazes and hidden regions, you have access to an instant overhead map, showing you exactly where you've been and the route you took. Since there are a number of side trips in the game, as well as passageways going in various directions, this mapping feature is extremely welcome — although it would be nice to play the whole game from the overhead map.

Not everything about *Uukrull* is perfect, but its flaws are common to the fantasy role-playing genre. First of all, there is too much fighting. Even if endless combat doesn't bother your sensitive soul, battling evil creature after evil creature simply gets tedious after awhile.

One single bat against your brave, powerful party? Don't get too cocky — these creatures are terrifying.

With everything else this game has going for it, including the puzzles to solve and mini-quests to manage, it's a shame that the designers reverted to frequent battles as a way of measuring progress and keeping the game challenging. Less frequent but more important battles seems a much better idea, but hardly any game has taken this possibility seriously.

The other difficulty is again a characteristic of the genre: While the first-person perspective is a good one, *Uukrull*, like other games, doesn't allow you to see what's in front of you. If a group of enemy soldiers is standing in one corner of the lighted corridor which you've just entered, you should see them and be able to either run away or sneak up on them. Instead, you simply run into them, even though they don't appear in the graphic on-screen.

If you're looking for an elementary game to help you break into role-playing adventures, consider *The Dark Heart of Uukrull*. It requires a lot of time, yet it is very playable and offers practically all the details found in the more complex games.

GP

Hardware requirements: 256K minimum memory; VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, Tandy 16-color, or Hercules graphics.

You've Been Framed!

Agent Frank McBain is dead...but why did they pin it on you? You've just 96 hours to find out...crack an international spy ring...and prevent an ***INTERNATIONAL DISASTER.***

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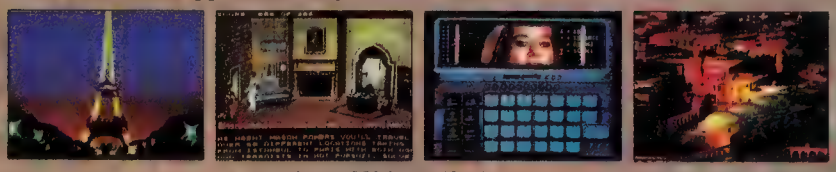

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Choose your character from this list. Each has a balanced set of advantages and disadvantages, and different strategies must be used with each.

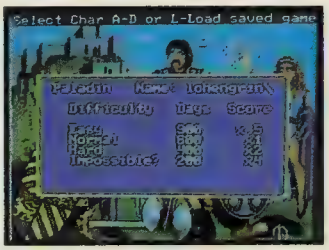
King's Bounty

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

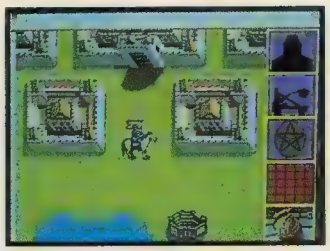
Judging from the feedback from our readers, there are a lot of PC owners who like the *idea* of getting involved in a fantasy role-playing game (RPG), but whose early frustration with the genre has led them actively to shun new specimens.

The most common cause of that frustration? Game designers who try to out-clever the player by throwing him into no-way-out situations, forcing him to solve elaborate puzzles with no straight answer, having to map endless mazes, and — the most vociferous complaint of all — having to build experience in constant battles with trolls, orcs, and assorted mages.

Until recently, many of the most popular RPGs were designed for an audience with a certain level of expertise. But as the PC game market began to soften about 18 months ago, the smarter programmers realized that the hardcore dungeons-and-dragons type of audience was no longer large enough to support new games. And we started seeing user-friendly RPGs such as *The Magic Candle* and *Ultima VI* — games in which the player had plenty of time to explore the fantasy environment, interact with the characters, and fight only at reasonable intervals or for some concrete reason.



The easy setting gives you time to explore and figure out the game's dynamics — it doesn't mean that the enemies are easier to defeat.



New games begin at the castle of King Maximus. You must return there periodically to be promoted or to recruit new troops.

Each time you visit a town, you have a chance to acquire new spells, rent a boat, or take out a contract on one of the local villains.

Now comes *King's Bounty*, a charming and thoroughly likeable RPG from **New World Computing** that's the perfect introduction to the genre for someone who's felt its attractions but has hesitated to dig in because of its reputation for difficulty. The game isn't without subtlety or challenge — it has plenty of both — but these attributes develop through the playing, instead of appearing as periodic bolts from the blue.

The levels of trickiness and difficulty rise in a curve that is roughly commensurate with the player's growing power, wisdom, and expertise. Frustrations arise, but by the time you encounter the really tough puzzles and battles, you've grown strong enough and cunning enough to handle them ... usually.

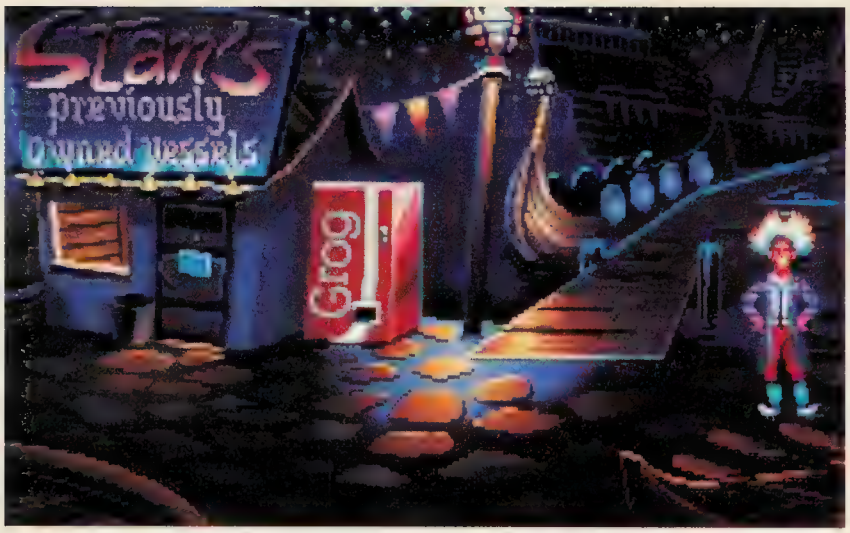
A KING WITHOUT HIS SCEPTRE

A long narrative which takes up the first half of the manual sets the background for the story, but you can skip it if you want — it tells you nothing essential to your success in the game. The premise is simple enough. The fantasy world in *King's Bounty* is comprised of four diverse continents populated by monsters, the undead, humans, and near-humans. Noble King Maximus has unified and ruled this chaotic land through the power of his Sceptre of Order.

Now a group of evil-doers, led by vile archmage Arech Dragonbreath, has stolen the sceptre and hidden it. The only extant map showing its location has been cut into 25 pieces: Each of the 17 thieves has one piece, and the other eight are buried with various artifacts of power, two on each continent.

Your quest, naturally, is to find the sceptre before time runs out, King Maximus dies, and

THESE PIRATES HAVE TONGUES AS SHARP AS THEIR SWORDS.



Lucasfilm™ Games' swashbuckling new graphic adventure lets you trade insults with some of the saltiest seamen to ever sail the seven seas.

In *The Secret of Monkey Island,*™ you'll sling one-liners with a fast-talking used ship salesman, a sarcastic swordmaster, a wisecracking corpse, and a prisoner whose breath would stop a horse. You'll also hunt for buried treasure, chase after a beautiful woman, and—perhaps—unravel one of the twistiest plots in the history of adventure gaming.

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Being the easy-going types they are, your new pirate pals invite you into the club. Just as soon as you've completed three *tiny* trials.

Among other things, you'll need to sedate some piranha poodles, burglarize the governor's mansion, and do business with the scum of the earth. And if that's not enough, you'll have to figure out whether the 300-pound voodoo priestess covets your rubber chicken, fetid fish, pack of breath mints, or…

If the brigands don't grab you, the graphics will.

Lucasfilm Games set today's graphic standards with games like *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.* Now *The Secret of Monkey Island* ups the standards a few more notches with stunning 256-color VGA graphics (16-color EGA version also available), proportionally scaled animated characters, and cinematic pans and camera angles.

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If you can solve a few sneaky puzzles in a special demo of *The Secrets of Monkey Island,* you might just win one of the sweetest prizes since Captain Kidd's treasure chest. A Carnival Cruise for two, one of a hundred AdLib™ sound cards, or one of hundreds more prizes! You'll find the demo and complete rules in specially-marked boxes of 3M diskettes. Or send a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer to: Monkey Demo, PO Box 10228, San Rafael, CA 94912.

MONKEY ISLAND TREASURE HUNT CONTEST

So act fast, think fast, and enter fast. Because while playing *The Secret of Monkey Island* is an adventure, winning the Treasure Hunt is a real trip.

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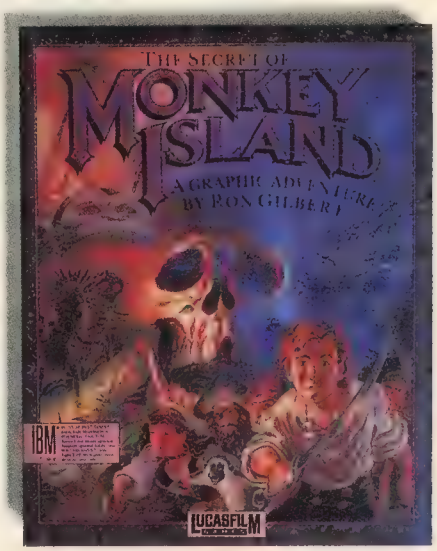
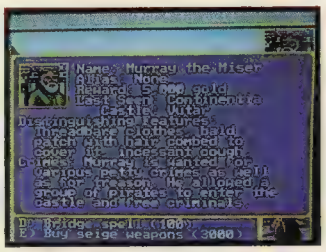


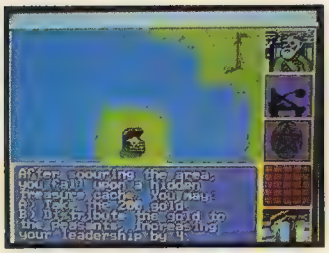
The Secret of Monkey Island is available for IBM and 100% compatibles in 16-color EGA and 256-color VGA versions. Visit your retailer or order directly with Visa/MC by calling 1-800-STARWARS (in Canada 1-800-828-7927). ™ and © 1990, LucasArts Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc. 3M is a trademark of 3M Corp. AdLib is a trademark of AdLib, Inc. Cruise prize arranged with the "Fun Ships" of Carnival Cruise Lines, The Most Popular Cruise Line In The World, ship's registry: Bahamas and Liberia.



The two easiest villains are Hack the Rogue and Murray the Miser. You can probably defeat them with an army of less than 100 (excluding peasants, unless you're simply using them for cannon fodder.)

You can either keep the money or give it to your troops to advance your leadership rating. A balance between selfishness and generosity is probably the best approach to take.

the four continents sink into terminal darkness and violence. On its hard setting, the game gives you 400 days in which to accomplish this; the average setting gives you 600; and the easy one gives you a luxurious 900-day framework. The time limits are the only differences in the three modes — the monsters and challenges are just as tough in the 900-day game as they are in the 400.


After scouring the area,
you find you've a hidden
treasure cache. You may:
A) Take the 200 gold
B) Distribute the gold to
the peasants, increasing
your leadership by 1

One good strategy is to rent a boat and sail around the entire continent, grabbing treasure chests wherever you find them and avoiding battles with stronger foes.

You must track down and vanquish each of the villains and locate the eight hidden artifacts in order to assemble the map and find the sceptre. Any time you visit a town, you can put a contract on a nearby villain, enabling you to gain fame and fortune by bringing in that particular miscreant. Beware of capturing villains who *aren't* under contract — you get a reward, but the bad guy is set free. The next time you run into him, he'll be even more powerful.

Once you've successfully captured a villain's castle, you should leave a garrison (at least in the first stages of the game), so that the fortress can't be reoccupied by monsters. The garrison need only provide token resistance — a few peasants work just as well as a costly bunch of knights — but it's a detail you may overlook in the heat of victory.

MONEY, MONEY

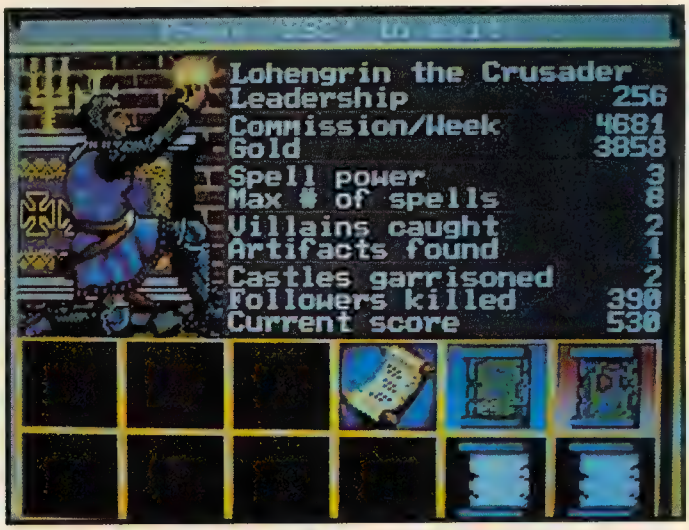
Your first decision must be to choose your character type: knight, paladin, barbarian, or sorceress. Each one has individual strengths and weaknesses — one may raise troops easily, while another may have enhanced spell-casting ability, and so on.

You can even play four games at once from your hard drive, using each type of character, different strategies, and parallel destinies. Since location and strength of monsters, treasures, bonuses, and artifacts are chosen at random, each game is completely different from any other.

Because overland travel is both difficult and exceedingly dangerous, one good basic strategy is to rent a boat and sail around the first continent, looking for artifacts and for treasure chests which contain bonuses or money. You can either add the funds to your treasury or use them to increase your leadership rating by distributing the loot to your peasants.

Most treasure is guarded by enemy forces, but you have a chance *before* combat starts to see if your foes are too strong for you. If they are, you can usually scoot back to the boat and move on to a chest that's easier to snatch. Navigation and recordkeeping are easy because of the game's handy auto-mapping function.

The game advances by one-week increments. At the end of each week, your budget is flashed onto the screen. If you find yourself temporarily strapped for funds (a likely possibility), you can push a key and skip to "payday," when the king's weekly stipend is delivered. If you're racing the calendar to find the



You can view your character and statistics any time during the game. The higher your leadership rating, the more troops you can command in battle.

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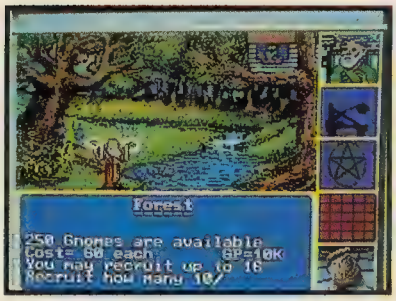

Periodically, you have a chance to recruit new types of soldiers. Remember that you can only have five different types of warriors in your army at any given time.

When organizing your forces, the two most important factors — other than sheer numbers — are skill level and morale.

sceptre, you can use a stop-time spell to freeze the game's internal clock while your party continues to travel.

In the first part of the game, it's a good idea to use your treasure chest bonuses to build your leadership rating. By the time you get through exploring Forestia, the second of the four continents, it's probably OK to be selfish and keep the money. After all, there's no point in having a huge leadership ability if you don't have enough gold to raise the kind of army you need.

Stay on the lookout for map-icons that give you access to other continents. They're usually just lying around in plain sight, yours for the taking. Once you have such a map, you can make quick, fairly safe raids into other continents, where the treasures are larger.

Once you're satisfied with the size of your treasury, recruit an army by returning to Maximus' castle or revisiting some of the warrior encampments you've discovered during your travels. Once you have a show of force, go after the two easiest villains, Murray the Miser and Hack the Rogue.

You ought to be able to defeat them with a fairly modest army (remember to buy siege equipment, however, or you can't attack them at all), and once you've done

The combat system in King's Bounty *is simple and effective. You almost never have to fight a battle unless you want to.*

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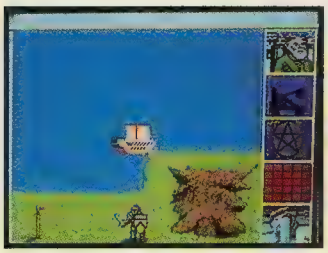
After surveying the area, you discover that it is rich in mineral deposits.
The King rewards you for your find by increasing your weekly income by 20

In return for discovering treasure chests holding valuable mineral deposits, the king will cut you in for a percentage of the take — an easy way to increase your salary.

so, the king will promote you and raise your salary so you can *really* start building a powerful force.

FIGHTING THE DEAD AND UNDEAD

You can succeed in this game with an all-human army, an army of mixed humans and near-human types, or an army of the undead. It may be advantageous from time to time to use mixed forces, but be aware that the inclusion of zombies, ghosts, vampires, and the like causes the morale of the other troops to fall. If the spooks and ogres hang around long enough, some of your best human units may just desert without warning.



Not only does having a boat nearby gives you the option of avoiding battle, but it also makes it relatively easy to explore large parts of the four continents.

Combat is straightforward: Missiles are fired, blows exchanged, and the computer keeps score. Since victory usually goes to the side with the most hit points, tactical expertise is slight, but there are things you can do to maximize your enemy's strength and minimize your own. As useful as magic is during the game, there's no one or no thing that can't eventually be killed with good old cold steel.

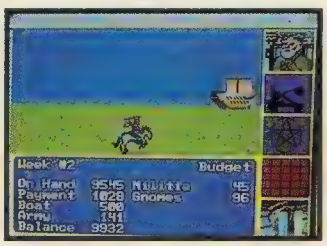
Still, some enemies are pretty scary when you first encounter them. Dragons, for instance, require 200 hit points to kill, and if you're attacking a castle defended by a half dozen of them, you've got your work cut out for you.

Before you can capture the villains in their castles, you must go to the nearest town and invest a large sum of money in siege equipment. If your battle is successful, your investment is handsomely repaid.

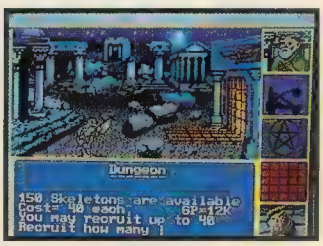
Nothing, however, is more disconcerting that your first encounter with ghosts. These creatures have a very nasty ability — if they kill someone in combat, that victim instantly becomes a ghost and joins the battle on the ghost's side! Say you're attacked by 20 ghosts and manage to kill ten of them. Those ten then attack you and kill 12 of your men. Now you have 22 ghosts to kill instead of 20, and 12 fewer men to do it.

So until you have several "turn undead" spells and a massive contingent of archers (elves preferred, but orcs will do), *avoid* the ghosts entirely. When you're strong enough to enter battle with a ghost-equipped force, concentrate maximum firepower on them, and stay as far on the left side of the screen as possible. In this position, the ghosts can't get to you in one turn. If you can wipe them out before they kill anyone, you're safe and will probably win the battle handily.

Be sure to jot down the locations of the different warriors on each continent. As your fortunes increase, you should revisit the camps of barbarians, archmages, and the



At the end of each week, you're shown your budgetary figures. Money isn't everything, of course, but it does buy the most powerful monsters.



The undead make powerful soldiers, but when you mix them with human warriors, the latter suffer a decline in morale. Who can blame them?

FALCON 3.0
THE ONLY SIMULATION BETTER THAN THIS ONE IS STILL CLASSIFIED

The bogey came out of nowhere. You see him just off your tail. The adrenalin hits you like a fist. You call your wingman: "Viper One, I've got a bandit on my six. This is not good..."

The original Falcon™ F-16 Fighter Simulation was acclaimed for its realism. Now, Falcon 3.0™ takes this authenticity to the edge. The flight models are real. The terrain is real. The radar and weapons systems are real. And the threats are real. No phony weapons or magic bullets here... just the best civilian F-16 simulation available. You don't just play Falcon 3.0, you strap yourself in and get ready for battle.

You go to afterburner and your Falcon jumps, slamming you back in the seat. The MiG 29 has just reached missile range... There! He's fired, the deadly rocket screams toward you, seeing nothing but the heat of your exhaust. Without thinking, you drop a series of flares hoping to confuse it, and yank back on the stick... 50 degrees... 80... over the top... your Head Up display shows you're pulling 9g's...

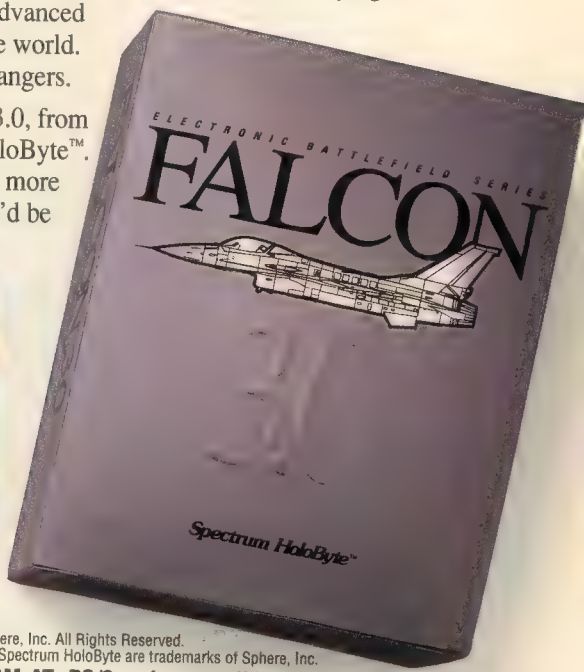
With Falcon 3.0, you lead your own squadron of pilots. Your missions are straight from today's headlines: Panama, Iraq, or some other international hot spot. The mountains, valleys, and rivers you fly over conform precisely to military maps of the areas.

You and your wingman begin the attack, deep behind enemy lines.

... Nearly blacked out, you ease forward on the stick. The g's drop, and you can see again. There he is! You're on HIS six now. This is going to be sweet. As you get tone you know he's yours.

True to the General Dynamics F-16 Falcon, Falcon 3.0 gives you all the exhilaration of flying one of the most advanced fighters in the world. And all the dangers.

Falcon 3.0, from Spectrum HoloByte™. If it were any more authentic, we'd be in trouble.



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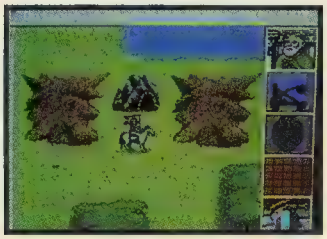
like in order to recruit larger forces. The larger your army, the better your chances of winning battles with the most powerful and dangerous villains.

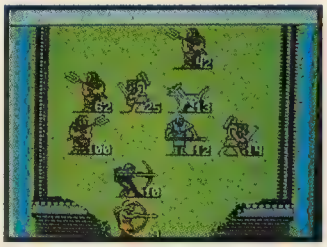
The magical spells are useful and are more than worth the time and money invested in them. There aren't any tricks to earning the magic, either. Just save up 5,000 gold pieces, visit the chief magician behind the king's castle, and you've got your union card. After that, you can buy any over-the-counter spell you want, provided you keep a record of which spells are available in which towns.



Some hillside entrances lead to teleportation warps that send you half a continent away. These can be useful in getting about, so write down their locations when you find them.

NO MUTINY ON THIS BOUNTY

King's Bounty is distinguished by a fine balance of details. Though you probably won't develop a coherent strategy until after a few false starts, the basic program is blessedly straightforward and free of all those no-way-out boobytraps found in many RPGs. Your goals are clear, and everything you need to succeed is *there*, if you just use your head and figure out the right ways to employ the system's details.



Since the game has an automatic-mapping feature, you won't waste time covering the same ground more than once.

After you've got a fairly sizable weekly income, take magic instruction — unless you're already a sorceress.

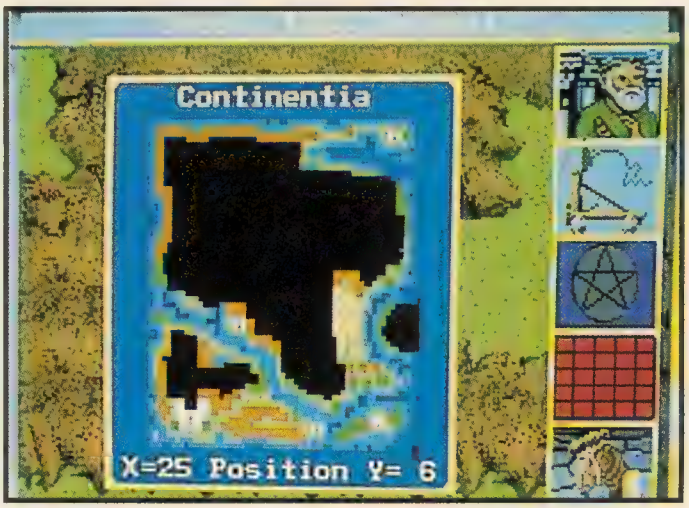
Progress is, of course, fairly slow in the beginning, but as the game gets deeper and the time limit gets closer, the general pace of play becomes faster and more intense. By the time you're down to the last few villains, you should have a powerful army, loads of magic spells, and *just barely* enough time to succeed. Win or lose, the climactic weeks of game time are very exciting.

King's Bounty features bright, colorful graphics and a very easy interface. Just push the O key to see all your options, then press another key to execute the particular step you desire. Once you get past the Tolkienesque introduction, the manual tells you everything you need to know to get started.

With its scope and complexity, *King's Bounty* is a fun game that you don't have to invest a major portion of your life to play. Newcomers to the fascinating, sometimes obdurate genre of RPGs will find that this game offers plenty of challenge, but deals out the frustrations and defeats with a just, even hand.

Veteran role-players will probably zip through it in fairly short order, but they too will have a good time. All the right ingredients for a stirring fantasy-world quest are here, and all the game's elements are nicely balanced.

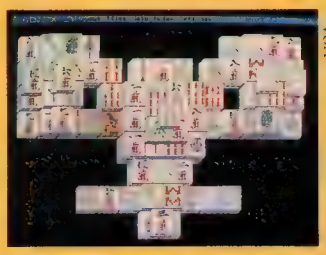
GP



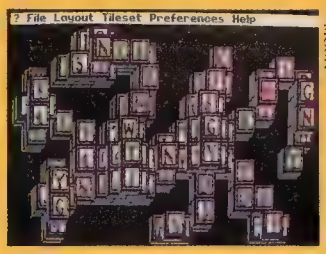
Sieges tend to be extremely tough and bloody battles. You might try recruiting a huge number of peasants and just throwing them at the enemy. They'll all die, of course, but they'll do some damage before they go — and they're cheap to recruit.

Hardware requirements: 384K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics.

SURRENDER TO A 3000-YEAR-OLD OBSESSION

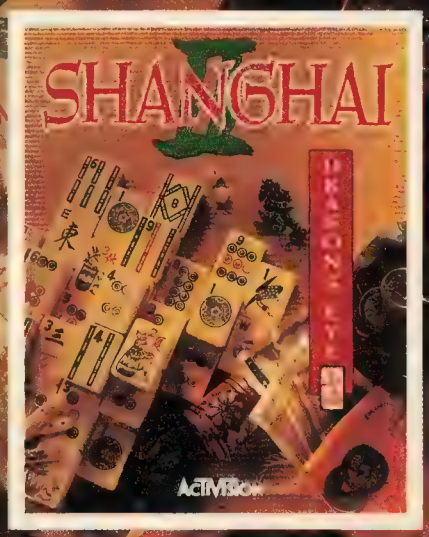


8 tile sets on colorful themes, from Playing Cards to the Flags of the World, Sports, Fantasy, and more. 640 x 480 Hi-Res 16-color VGA graphics render them all in gorgeous detail (also supports 320 x 200 256-color MCGA).



13 challenging tile formations, based on creatures from the Chinese calendar. Animations and sound effects bring the tiles to life. Ad Lib®, Roland®, Tandy music®, PS/1™, Game Blaster™, and Sound Blaster™ support.

3 modes of play. Indulge your obsession in Solitaire play, race the clock in Challenge *Shanghai*, take on all comers in Tournament competition. Or earn the right to play Dragon's Eye, an exclusive tile challenge for the superior player.



The most captivating strategy game of all time just got better.

Introducing *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye*. Based, like the original *Shanghai*, on the ancient fascination of Mah-Jongg. And now with more of everything that made the original a computer game classic.

Several ways to play—Solitaire, Challenge, and Tournament—all so deceptively simple. The object: snap off matching pairs till you run out of tiles, run out of moves, or run out of time. Simple? Sure—and simply addicting.

And at the heart of *Shanghai II*, you'll find Dragon's Eye. It's the ultimate challenge, even for the most cunning and seasoned *Shanghai* player.

Shanghai II features 8 beautifully detailed tile sets . . . over a dozen layouts based on the Chinese zodiac . . . and a Layout Construction Set, for devising an endless variety of original formations.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye. It will beguile your days and nights. Demand your concentration. Become your obsession.

Surrender.

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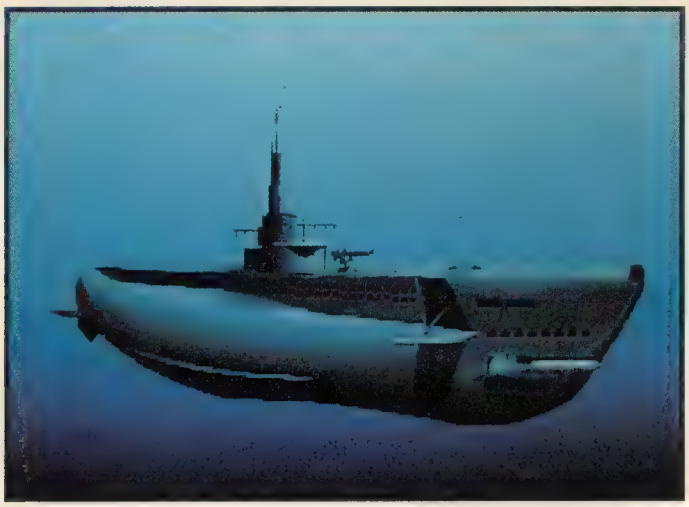


Silent Service II *offers some of the most attractive VGA graphics ever lavished on a simulation.*

Silent Service II

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

While movie sequels seldom stack up to the originals, the reverse is more often true in the computer gaming field. The prevalence of faster, more powerful PCs, the accessibility of superior color graphics, the evolution of smoother and friendlier interface concepts—all of these give rise to game sequels that are often dramatic improvements over the original programs.

Case in point: *Silent Service II* from **MicroProse**. When Sid Meier's original *Silent Service* was released in 1985, it was a critical and popular success. Many aficionados still consider it the finest military simulation ever for eight-bit computers.

In early 1989, MicroProse's president, Bill Stealey, decided to commission a remake, one that would take advantage of the greater memory and power of contemporary 16-bit hardware. In particular, *Silent Service II* was to be designed to showcase the full capabilities of 256-color VGA graphics.

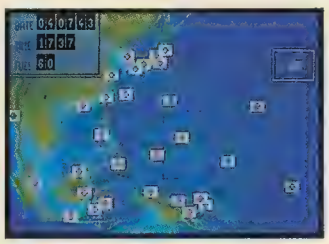
In this design objective, MicroProse has certainly succeeded. *Silent Service II* virtually *defines* the state of the art for PC graphics. The first time you train a periscope on a Japanese target, you'll be astonished at the realism achieved by graphics designer Kim Biscoe. Gone are the generic polygon shapes of yore — in their place are highly detailed, finely shaded classes of ships.

To achieve this kind of breathtaking realism, MicroProse took thousands of photographs of detailed 1/700th-scale tabletop models, then used complicated scaling algorithms to convert the resulting artwork into images that, when viewed through the periscope or bridge binoculars, look astoundingly like real Japanese ships.

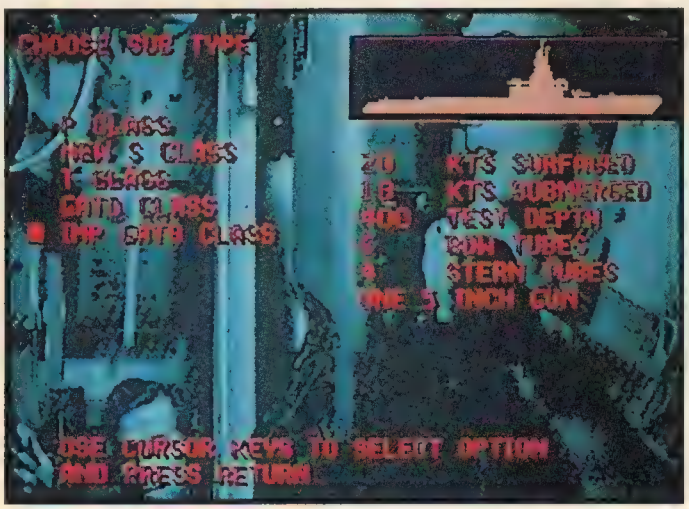
Full use of color, too, is made for enhanced dramatic effect and realism. Fires, explosions, and shell splashes are all vividly rendered, and some of the night battle scenes are spectacular. Just wait until you see the *Yamato* looming out of the darkness just outside of Truk Harbor — a vast black mountain of steel, majestic, sinister, and seemingly unsinkable.

Both interface and documentation are excellent. Few simulations of this scale and complexity are so wonderfully easy to slide into. Anyone who has ever seen World War II submarine movies can glance at the clean, logical keyboard overlay and master the game's basic controls in about 20 minutes. The challenge lies not in *figuring out* the program, but in the tactics and techniques of stalking, sinking, or evading enemy ships.

You can choose from a wide variety of missions, from single battles that last 20-30 minutes to entire careers that may take 100 hours or more to play.



Plot your war time patrols on this strategic map, which shows the locations of all friendly and hostile naval bases.



You choose the class of the sub you'll command. The Gato or improved Gato classes offer the best all-around combination of speed and firepower.

TAKE YOUR PICK

It's easy to see that a great deal of thought has gone into the difficulty levels of *Silent Service II*. Because submarine tactics are so specialized, and the possible battle scenarios are so varied, the introductory level is definitely recommended for beginners—even though most players will soon be ready to handle higher levels.

Spot your wingman through accurate Head Up Display.

Score: Avenger 2, Tanks 0.

Combat pilots call this monster "Warthog". It's **BIG**, it's **BAD**, it's ***UGLY!*** Armed with the 30-mm., GAU-8 seven barrel Avenger, the Hog is the deadliest tank killer ever to take to the sky. Now, Spectrum HoloByte puts the power of this awesome fighting machine in your hands with **AVENGER A-10™**.

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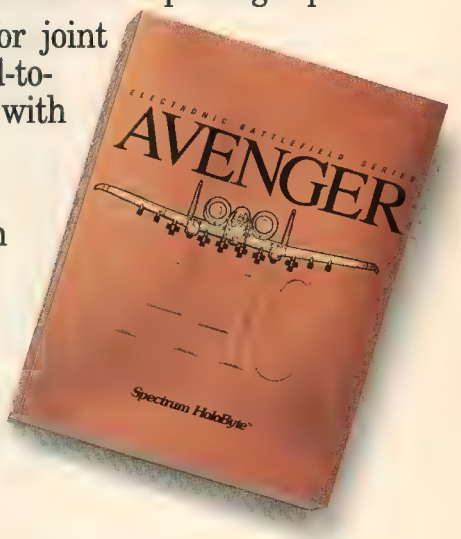
- Simultaneous operation of up to eight planes.
- Modem link-up for joint missions (or head-to-head challenges) with Falcon 3.0™ or another A-10.
- Real terrain with rolling 3-D for authentic battle backdrop.



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E L E C T R O N I C B A T T L E F I E L D S E R I E S

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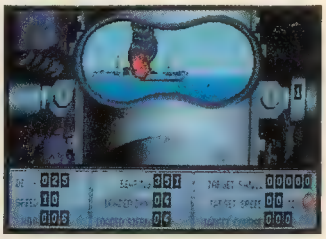
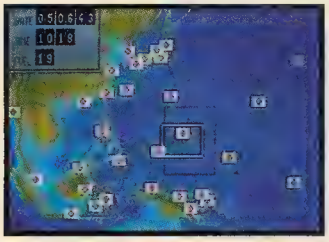
DATE 12 08 41
TIME 00 28
FUEL 59
CINCPAC regrets to inform you that...
Guam has surrendered to an overwhelming Japanese attack.
Please guide your future operations accordingly.

CINCPAC periodically updates you on events in the Pacific Theater. Some of these messages may influence your decisions as commander.



You may indeed encounter targets on your way to or from the actual patrol zone—this unescorted freighter made a perfect target for the last two torpedoes on board.

At the introductory level, you can get killed by slow reactions or glaring tactical blunders, but the level of risk is generally quite manageable. Japanese convoys don't zigzag, your torpedoes never misfire, and your puny five-inch deck gun packs enormous destructive wallop. As compensation for these advantages, the scoring is commensurately low for any victories achieved.



When the smaller white rectangle reaches the big black one, your patrol begins. Keep an eye on your fuel consumption and leave more than enough for the return voyage.

On the normal level, the enemy is somewhat more skillful and aggressive, and your sub is realistically vulnerable to damage. The advanced level is designed to reflect the perils and challenges faced by actual World War II skippers — most players will need to work up to it gradually.

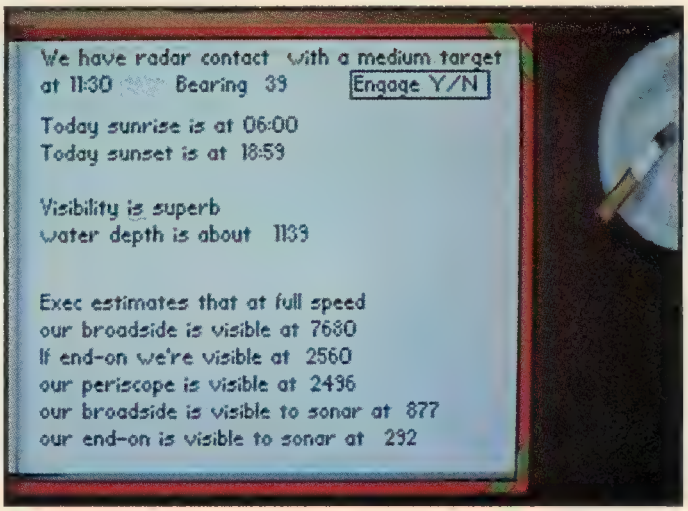
On the easy and intermediate levels, you can choose between "flawless" and "historical" torpedoes. If you're a stickler for realism and choose the latter, you'll have to endure the frustration of seeing juicy targets sail blithely away with nothing to show from their encounter with your sub except a few black and blue scratches.

You'll soon become proficient in basic submariner's tactics, learning how to hide from enemy sonar beneath thermal layers, when to go for the fake-out by shooting a cloud of debris from your tubes, or when it's safe to come up and finish off small or damaged targets with your deck gun. Wasting torpedoes is frowned upon — and bad strategy as well. You never know what targets may pop up just as soon as you run out of tin fish.

Conning your sub into battle is sometimes tricky, but it is mostly a matter of common sense. If, for example, you're tracking a convoy moving north at 13 knots, and visibility is only 9,000 yards, you can swing out to 10,000 yards, then crank up your surface speed to 20 knots. Eventually you're able to make a parallel run around the enemy's flank and get into good position for a torpedo ambush.

In real life, of course, submarine captains often spent many hours stalking their prey, setting up for that perfect salvo. Fortunately, *Silent Service II* gives you a time compression key that lets you make elaborate maneuvers in minutes.

Plotting a torpedo shoot is easy. Just remember the difference between "heading" (the direction your ship is pointing) and "bearing" (the direction in which you are looking). MicroProse even in-


We have radar contact with a medium target
at 11:30 Bearing 33 Engage Y/N
Today sunrise is at 06:00
Today sunset is at 18:53
Visibility is superb
Water depth is about 1133
Exec estimates that at full speed
our broadside is visible at 7680
If end-on we're visible at 2560
our periscope is visible at 2436
our broadside is visible to sonar at 877
our end-on is visible to sonar at 292

When a patrol contact is made, the screen displays all pertinent information about range, visibility, and size of target. Whether to engage, however, is your decision.

SOME OF HITLER'S DEADLIEST WEAPONS NEVER SAW ACTION. UNTIL NOW.

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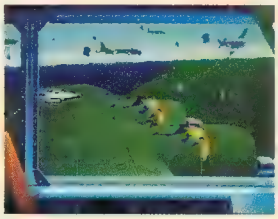
Desperate to stop the massive daylight bombing raids of the Allies, the Germans rushed their experimental aircraft into service in late 1944. You'll experience the nail-biting terror of piloting aircraft that were as dangerous to fly as they were to the enemy.

You'll rock with the impact of a direct hit. Struggle for visibility through oil smeared, bullet-shattered canopies. Watch in horror as your engine burns. And wrestle for control against G-forces and rough wind conditions. All with the vivid realism of bit-mapped 256-color VGA graphics and room-rattling sound effects.



In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe,* you'll do more than relive the air combat over Germany from 1943 to 1945. You'll decide for yourself whether these exotic superweapons could have changed the outcome of the war.

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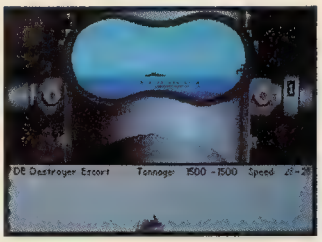
...THEY WERE FAST... THEY WERE DEADLY... THEY WERE OUTNUMBERED! THEY WERE THE .
SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE
by LAWRENCE HOLLAND
LUCASFILM GAMES

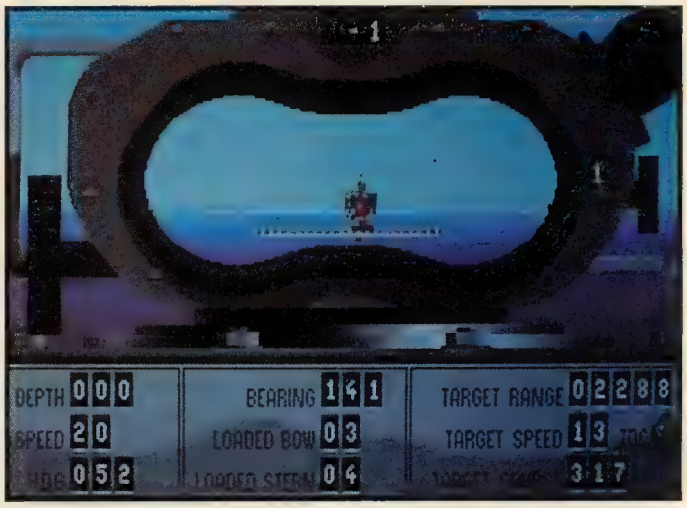
Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is available for IBM and 100% compatibles. Visit your retailer or order directly with Visa/MC by calling 1-800-STARWARS (in Canada 1-800-828-7927). ™ and © 1990 LucasArts Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc.



Any target viewed through the periscope can be identified by calling up the Ship ID Book and flipping through its entries.

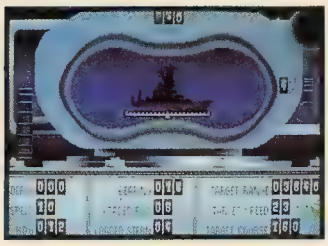
cludes a keystroke that lets you turn the vessel to match the view, or vice versa. The mathematics of a firing are handled painlessly by your TDC (Torpedo Data Computer) — all you have to do is mark the target through either the periscope or the bridge binoculars, then make sure you're within range.

If you're a Luddite, or if your TDC happens to get damaged in combat, there are full instructions for figuring a manual torpedo shoot as well. A bit of graph paper may come in handy for this kind of plotting, but rest assured that the TDC does a more-than-adequate job of aiming.

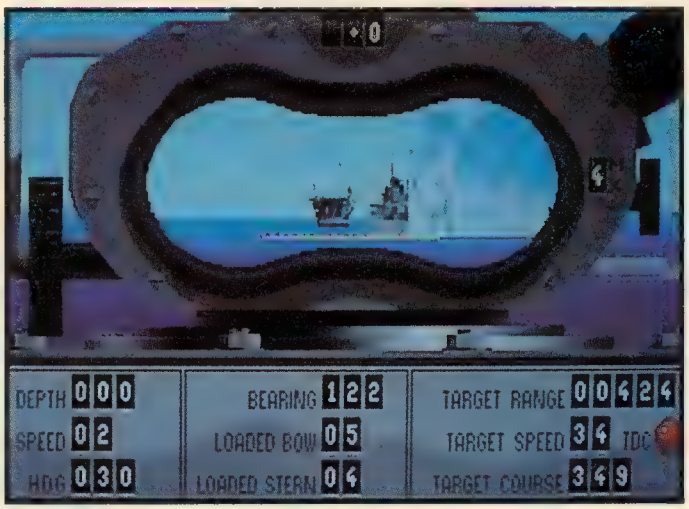


The deck gun is an economical way to sink a ship when used against small or damaged targets. It's even possible — though not likely — to defeat a single destroyer in one-on-one combat.

Or if you're feeling really cocky, you can try the "ultimate" level. At this setting, the Japanese seem telepathic as well as ferocious, your sub may suffer from hidden construction flaws, and a good number of your torpedoes are duds. MicroProse admits that this setting is "harder than real life," and many players will, indeed, find it suicidal. Still, like Mt. Everest, it's *there*. If you manage to become jaded by the three easier levels, you always have the option of pushing your skills and luck to their outer limits.



Here's the most awesome target you can face: the super-battleship Yamato, *looming out of the darkness like a sinister moun-*



Here's a blunder: Trying to get a fish into that carrier with a stern-shot is virtually impossible. For his incompetence, this sub skipper got blown out of the water by the escorts.

SAILING INTO ACTION

Once you've mastered the basics and blasted a few rusty hulks on the training range, you'll want to go into action. It's probably best to start with individual battle scenarios, and *Silent Service II* offers a good sampling of engagements based on the historic careers of several leading American sub commanders. These pit you against individual targets or whole convoys under various conditions of visibility and water depth.

The manual offers valuable tactical advice to help you get started, as well as providing an account of what actually happened in the historic engagement so that you can compare your results with the real ones.

Probably the most fasci-

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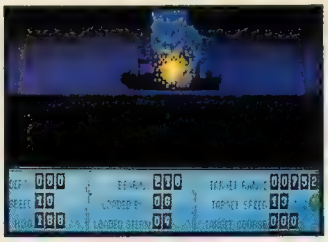
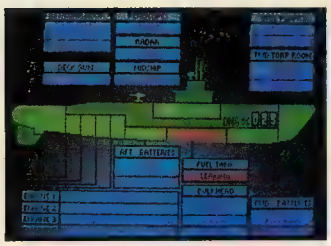


Nighttime surface engagements feature some of the game's most spectacular graphics.

nating of all these one-shot battles is the "Sink the Yamato" scenario. A night action, this scenario recreates an encounter on Christmas Day in 1943 between the U.S.S. *Skate* and the battleship *Yamato*. The *Yamato*, the pride of the Imperial Japanese Navy, was the largest and most powerful warship ever built (her main battery consisted of 18.1-inch guns!).



Access this screen to determine the extent of damage you've sustained. Sometimes the crew can effect repairs, enabling you to stay on patrol.

The drama of this encounter is heightened simply because there was no more prestigious target in the Pacific — every sub skipper worth his stripes wanted a crack at the *Yamato*, though the ship's armor was so massive that multiple torpedo hits would be needed even to slow it down.

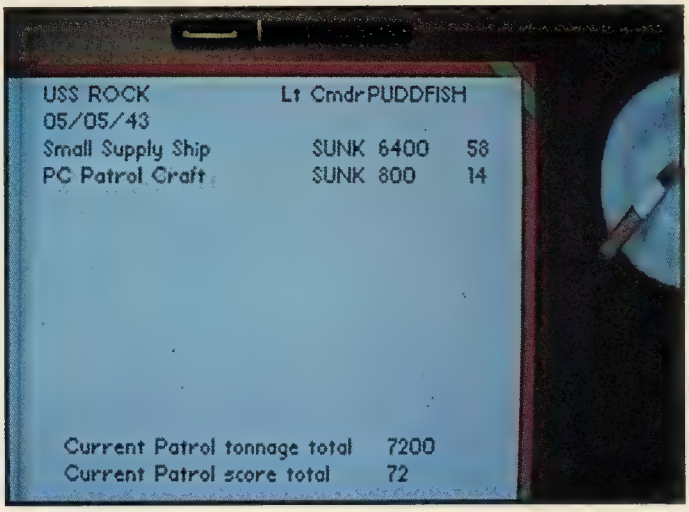
Nobody was sure if the vessel *could* be sunk by torpedoes, in fact, so there's a tremendous extra challenge built into this scenario. In reality, the battleship was hit by two torpedoes that Christmas, but the damage was so trivial that she didn't even slow down. Lotsa luck.

There is also a "random encounter" option for the individual battle scenarios, in which the computer throws you a new and different situation each time you select that mode. Sometimes you find your periscope filled with tankers; other times it's a single big carrier with a powerful escort.

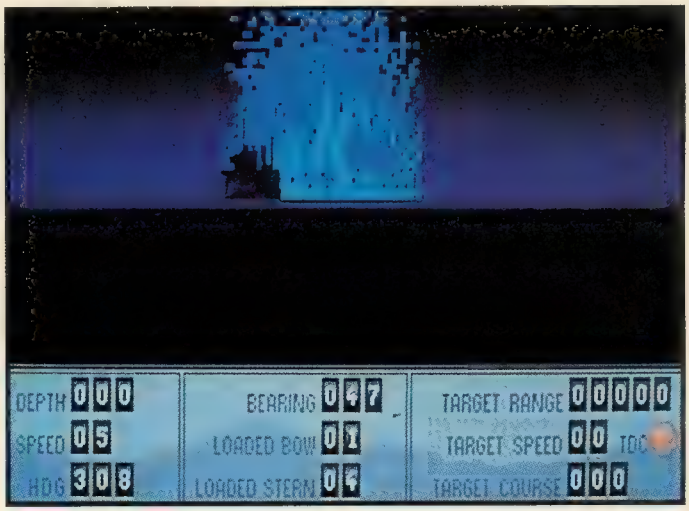
It might be a troopship convoy bound for the Solomon Islands with reinforcements for Guadalcanal — or you could find yourself staring at the bow-wake of an angry destroyer at such close range that all you can do is dive, try to evade his depth charges, and hope for a chance at him later.

Once you've explored the individual battles, you can go on extended patrols, starting from Midway, Pearl Harbor, or Australia. The manual and the full-color map that comes with it provide a complete rundown on where the best hunting can be found at every stage of the war.

Patrols are run according to strictly realistic parameters — you have only so much fuel



After each battle, your log is updated to show the results.



If you opt for the finest degree of realism, a good percentage of your torpedoes will be duds or misfires, putting a dent, rather than a hole, in the enemy vessel.

THE 25TH CENTURY

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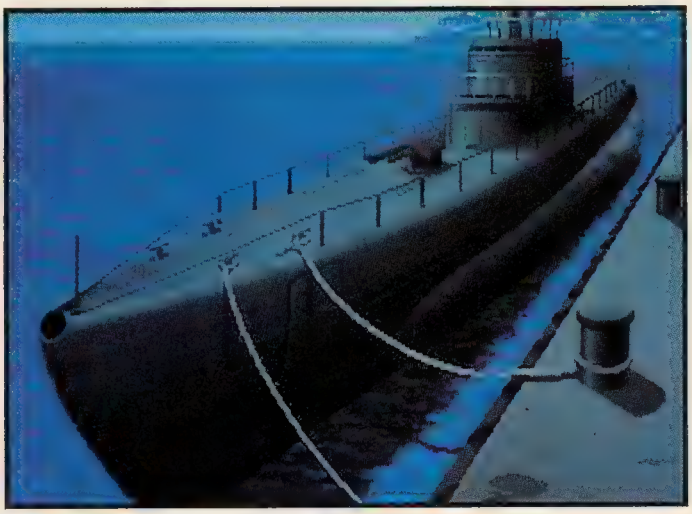

When the patrol is over, return to base for shore leave, while the yard crews repair and resupply your sub. You may get a chance to command a newer vessel, too.

for getting to your patrol zone, for snooping around, and for getting back. A wise skipper always notes how much fuel he used getting *to* the patrol zone, and when the remaining supply reaches 150 percent of that figure, heads for home. This way, there's an extra "cushion" of fuel in case you suffer damage to your fuel tanks during an attack.

Whether you choose a single battle or a far-flung patrol, you have the option of

UNITED STATES NAVY
Sir,
I wish to commend you on returning from a taxing war patrol. Your efforts are appreciated, but unfortunately your record does not permit me to make any special awards at this time.
I sincerely hope you have better luck on your next war patrol.
SIGNED
Base Commander

Unsatisfactory performance brings a gentlemanly but stern letter from CINCPAC — this won't help your service record.

selecting any date you like — starting, of course, with December 7, 1941. Note that if you choose a patrol in 1942, you get stuck with a slow, poorly armed, obsolete vessel, and if you choose any date after January 1945, you're not likely to find many targets — the American submarine campaign was a smashing success in 1944.

The ultimate challenge of *Silent Service II* is the "war career" mode. On this setting, you "join" the U.S. Navy on any date you specify (the week after Pearl Harbor would be the most suitable) and pursue an entire career, starting on an older type of boat and getting to serve on new, improved vessel classes as they become historically available.

You go on scores of patrols, encountering a host of unpredictable dangers, opportunities, and frustrations. You can be decorated, promoted, or chastised by your superiors, depending on your luck and performance. The career scenario runs until either the war ends or you get killed.

These simulations can run into hundreds of hours of play, and, don't forget, you can undertake them on four levels of difficulty. When you take all of its options into account, *Silent Service II* really offers the game player a lifetime of submarine action.

The manual includes good background history, thorough data on battle tactics and patrol strategies, and lots of attractive illustrations and diagrams. It's as much a pleasure to read as the simulation is to play.

Silent Service II is an epic simulation, containing an almost inexhaustible range of exciting possibilities. Graphically, it's attractive enough to send a lot of PC owners out to purchase that VGA board they've been putting off buying. It's been designed with the utmost in care, user-friendliness, and creative flair. Hats off, MicroProse — you've created a masterpiece!

GP

On the other hand, a very unsatisfactory patrol brings condolences to your kin back in the States, and a watery grave for the hapless skipper.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA); VGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick optional; supports sound boards.

INTRODUCING

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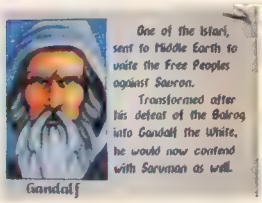
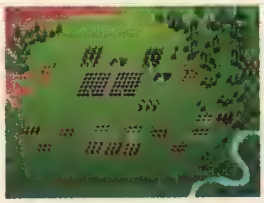
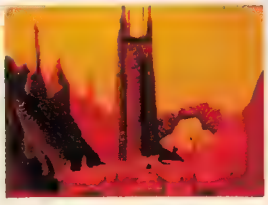
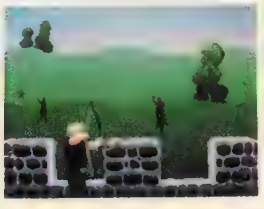
See your local retailer, or call 1-800-826-0706 to order.

Actual IBM screens


One of the Istari, sent to Middle Earth to unite the Free Peoples against Sauron.
Transformed after his defeat of the Balrog into Gandalf the White, he would now contend with Saruman as well.
Gandalf







System Requirements: IBM PC, true IBM compatibles. DOS 2.1 or higher. 512K RAM. MCGA, VGA, EGA or Tandy graphics card. 5.25" and 3.5" disks available. Amiga and Atari STE. Mouse optional. Ad Lib card support.

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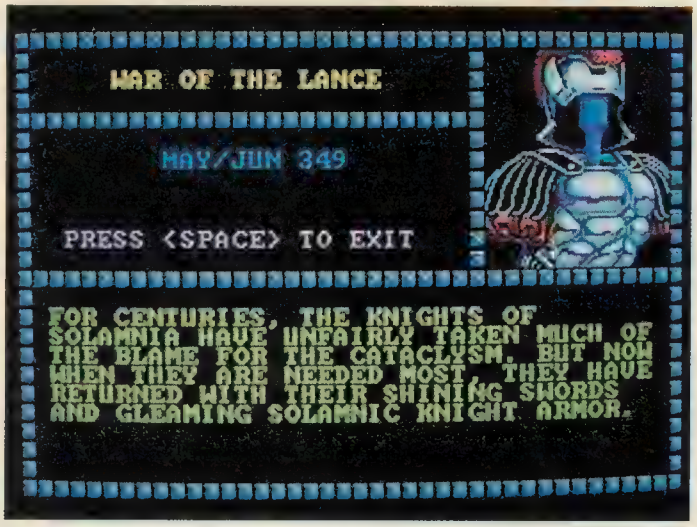

WAR OF THE LANCE
MAY/JUN 349
PRESS <SPACE> TO EXIT
FOR CENTURIES, THE KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA HAVE UNFAIRLY TAKEN MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR THE CATACLYSM. BUT NOW WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED MOST, THEY HAVE RETURNED WITH THEIR SHINING SWORDS AND GLEAMING SOLAMNIC KNIGHT ARMOR.

At the beginning of the game, you're given some background information about how the war began. These informational screens appear throughout the game.

War of the Lance

NEIL RANDALL

Dungeons & Dragons came into being at about the same time as the first personal computers. Of course, almost nobody owned a computer at that time — not only because they were expensive, but also because there was little available software. But *a lot* of people owned Dungeons & Dragons, and the game created a very enthusiastic following.

Owning a computer became both possible and enjoyable with the advent of the Apple II, Commodore 64, and early Atari. It wasn't really surprising that D&D-type computer games hit the market shortly thereafter.

But before role-playing games were available for PCs, there were computer war games — which were among the first "simulations" attempted for home computers. Gary Gygax and David Arnasan, who designed the original Dungeons & Dragons, were war game designers before they hit on the idea of fantasy role playing. Their company, TSR (Tactical Studies Rules), still publishes the D&D line.

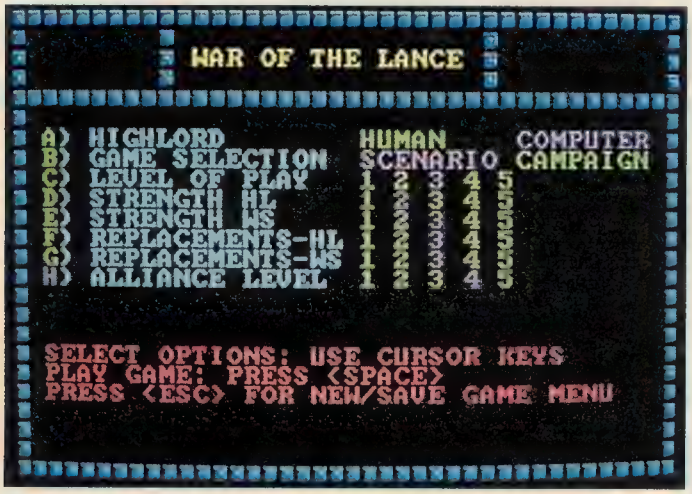
Before D&D, TSR published complex rules for military miniatures, and they published some board games as well. Once D&D took off, Gygax devoted all his time to role-playing games — but without his wargaming background, D&D would never have made it off the ground.

All of this background information is by way of introducing **SSI's** *War of the Lance*, the latest installment in the company's Advanced Dungeons & Dragons line. So far, four highly successful role-playing adventures (*Pool of Radiance*, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, *Champions of Krynn*, and *Secret of the Silver Blades*) have been published under the AD&D title, as well as two utilities for the non-computer AD&D player, two less successful action games (*Heroes of the Lance*, *Dragons of Flame*), a low-complexity role-playing adventure (*Hillsfar*), and even an intriguing flight simulator (*DragonStrike*).

War of the Lance is a war game, pure and simple. In this game you command armies on a detailed map and follow complicated rules. In this sense, this game is a throwback to SSI's earliest days, when the company pioneered the computer war game.

In other words, just as AD&D itself has its roots in war games, so computer AD&D comes from a company which began with war games. And just as TSR continues to release war-game-type products to support AD&D, so SSI sees a market for war games supporting its own AD&D. Some things, it seems, just refuse to change.

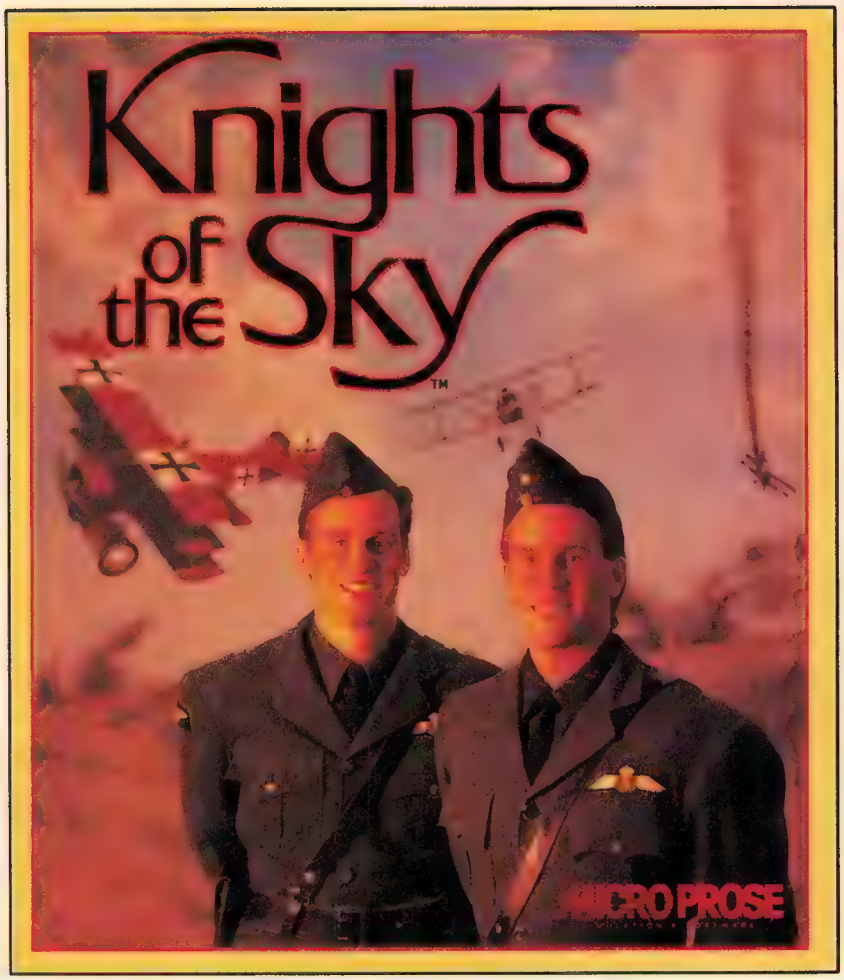
If you've ever played an SSI wargame, you'll have no trouble getting into *War of the Lance*. Its closest relative is the company's recent — and superb — *Sword of Aragon*. But playing *Sword of Aragon* is no guarantee of success in the challenging *War of the Lance*. This new game, which casts you very clearly in the role of underdog, keeps you hopping even at its easiest levels.


WAR OF THE LANCE
A) HIGHLORD HUMAN COMPUTER
B) GAME SELECTION SCENARIO CAMPAIGN
C) LEVEL OF PLAY 1 2 3 4 5
D) STRENGTH HL 1 2 3 4 5
E) STRENGTH WS 1 2 3 4 5
F) REPLACEMENTS-HL 1 2 3 4 5
G) REPLACEMENTS-WS 1 2 3 4 5
H) ALLIANCE LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5
SELECT OPTIONS: USE CURSOR KEYS
PLAY GAME: PRESS <SPACE>
PRESS <ESC> FOR NEW/SAVE GAME MENU

If you want to keep the Highlord forces under computer control, you might want to lower their strength a bit and increase the Alliance's level.

As they search for magical artifacts, your heroes can be lost, killed, or wounded. There are three options when this happens.

Notice the variety of terrain on the map — including tunnel entrances in the mountains.



THE BEST OF THE PAST

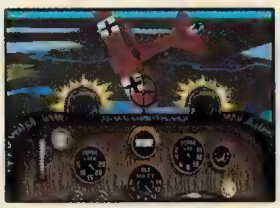
Step into the past, and into the cockpit of a World War I biplane for thrilling dogfights against the greatest aerial aces of all time. The masters of combat flight simulation present the masters of aerial dogfighting in *Knights of the Sky*.

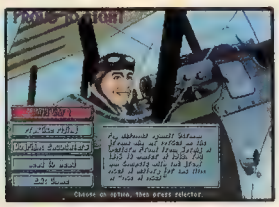
Play against the computer, or challenge a friend via direct link or modem. Dazzling Super 3-D Graphics and realistic sound deliver the action in unprecedented detail. Infantry units, trench lines and natural terrain features below are crystal clear — they'd better be: you have to navigate by them.

Flying without radar and at slightly less than the speed of sound, your dogfighting skills are more important than ever. Your opponents aren't just specks in the sky — you'll see them close-up, shake your fists at them, perhaps even salute their skill.

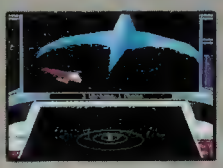
But there's more at stake than just reputation. When you're not dueling you'll help the Allies win World War I. Lend support to ground forces during the war's major offensives; take part in legendary bombing raids; penetrate Axis territory on aggressive patrols.

The heroic adventures of times past re-created through the latest advances in modern technology. As always, MicroProse presents the Best of Times.

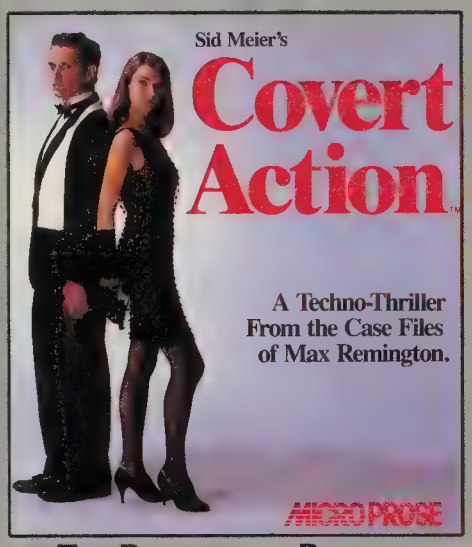




THE BEST OF THE FUTURE



Journey to the far future, to a time when Earth is uninhabitable, and you must find a new home for Mankind. The company that revolutionized combat flight simulation has taken another bold step, in graphics technology, sound and role-playing sophistication.



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The Best of Times All the Time.

If you're an AD&D fan who's never played a SSI war game, give *War of the Lance* a try. Unlike a role-playing adventure, which looks at things from an individual or party's point of view, *War of the Lance* lets you move entire armies into battle. Instead of trying to clear a dungeon of monsters, your goal is to clear a continent of invaders. It's a different perspective, but many will find it a very attractive one.

AN INSURMOUNTABLE TASK

War of the Lance is set in the popular world of DragonLance. Takhisis, Queen of Darkness, has entered into an alliance with the Highlord allies based in Nereka. Led by the exiled evil dragons, these armies are powerful and merciless, and their only goal is dominion over the entire continent of Ansalon.

During the Reinforcements/Replacement phase of the game, your units can receive invaluable fortification forces. Without them, you don't stand a chance.

You lead the forces of Whitestone on an enormous task: Not only must you move your meager forces to block the Highlord alliance's advance, but you must also try to persuade other nations to ally themselves with you. Since few of them know that the Highlord alliance is on the move, and fewer still are willing to risk life and limb, your quest is almost doomed from the start.

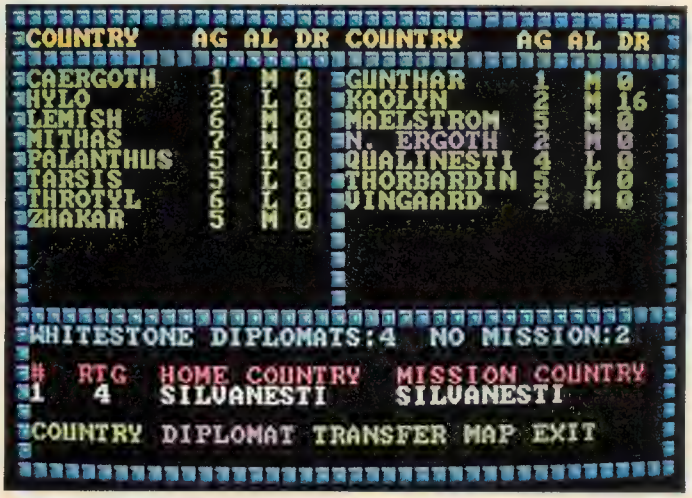
War of the Lance, therefore, is about diplomacy as much as it's about fighting. And, in keeping with the theme of the AD&D genre in general, it incorporates the opportunities for individual heroism. While the game is a little unusual, it's fairly easy to learn; before long, you'll be negotiating and fighting to your heart's content. You might not be winning very much, but that comes with practice.

You begin *War of the Lance* by customizing your game. Though you play the Whitestone player, the Highlord player can be controlled by either a human opponent or the computer. There are five possible setting adjustments for each level of play: strength of Highlord forces, strength of Whitestone forces, Highlord replacements, Whitestone replacements, and Alliance level.

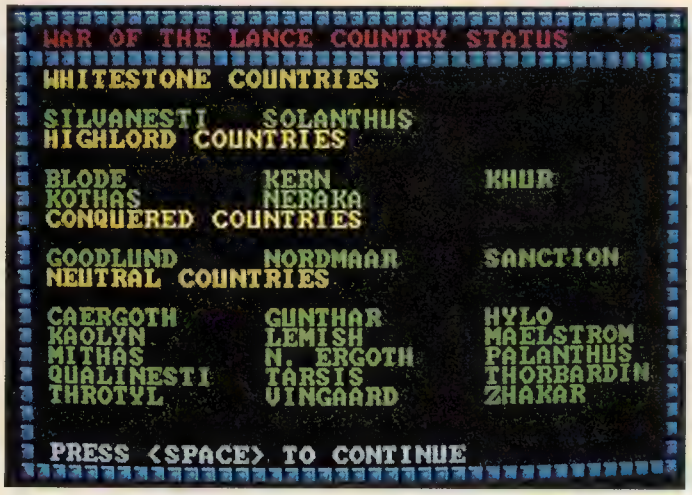
For example, if you want the Alliance portion of the game to present the greatest challenge, you'd lower the Alliance level to one or two, then raise the Whitestone forces above the Highlord forces. Or if you want to be forced to conserve armies, lower the replacement levels. And so on.

The final choice you must make is whether to play a scenario or a campaign. The scenarios begin at various points during the war, with each side possessing forces and allies. In the campaign mode, you start with small forces and no allies, while the Highlord player starts with only Nereka as an ally. If you choose the campaign game, be prepared to spend your first several turns trying to cement alliances.

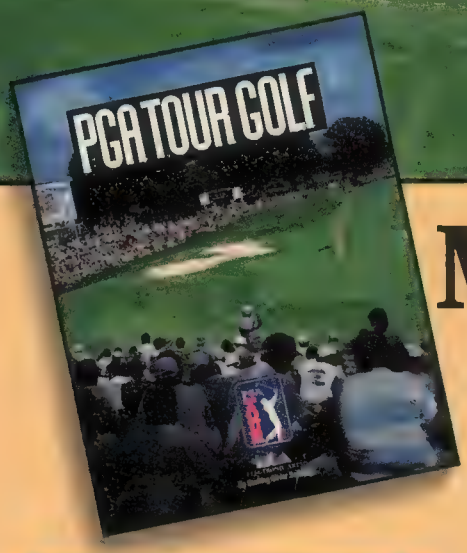
With all these options in place, the game is set to begin. Like almost all war games, *War of the Lance* is divided into phases — 18 in all, ranging from the Highlord Quest through Player-Two Combat. Difficult though it sounds, the phases pass quickly and easily


COUNTRY AG AL DR COUNTRY AG AL DR
CAERGOTH 1 M 0 GUNTHAR 1 M 0
HYLO 2 L 0 KAOLYN 2 M 16
LEMISH 6 M 0 MAELSTROM 5 M 0
MITHAS 7 M 0 N. ERGOTH 2 M 0
PALANTHUS 5 L 0 QUALINESTI 4 L 0
TARSIS 5 L 0 THORBARDIN 5 L 0
THROTYL 6 L 0 VINGAARD 2 M 0
ZHAKAR 5 M 0
WHITESTONE DIPLOMATS:4 NO MISSION:2
RTG HOME COUNTRY MISSION COUNTRY
1 4 SILVANESTI SILVANESTI
COUNTRY DIPLOMAT TRANSFER MAP EXIT

At the end of the Diplomatic phase, this screen offers a summary of the different countries' alliances.



You can send diplomats to selected countries from the second Alliance screen.



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— primarily because those of the computer-controlled player don't really involve you. The Highlord computer player executes its Champion phase and Diplomatic phase on its own, for example, and during its Combat phase your only actions are to give brief defensive orders.

A FAMILIAR FIGHT

Experienced war game players will recognize the movement and combat phases. In the movement phase, you move all your units wherever you wish on the map, although they're subject to certain rules (e.g., dragons move much farther than infantry armies). If you move adjacent to enemy units, you may engage them in battle.

Another phase, common to all war games, is the one in which your armies receive reinforcements and replacements. And, as in most war games, your units can coexist, or stack, in the same square.

DATE:MAY/JUN 349
SCORE:-2860
VICTORY LEVEL: MARGINAL HIGHLORD
MARGINAL HIGHLORD: (-2861 to -5000)
HIGHLORD
WHITESTONE
UNIT TYPE (VP) LOST LEFT LOST LEFT
INFANTRY 1 514 4071 1445 3156
CAVALRY 2 134 933 47 472
FLEET 2 0 0 0 0
PEGASUS 5 0 0 0 0
GRIFFON 5 0 0 0 0
DRAGON 10 0 0 0 0
CITADEL 250 0 2 0 3
LEADER 100 0 0 0 0
DRACONIAN 5 0 1382 0 0
WIZARD 20 0 0 0 0
CHAMPION 100 0 11 0 15
PRESS <SPACE> TO CONTINUE

The Victory Points screen shows the breakdown between Alliance and Highlord forces. Even at game's start, the score shows a Highlord victory. Your work is cut out for you.

North of our allied nation lies the Dwarven fort of Zhakar. The red shields represent Highlord forces.

War of the Lance, however, includes some facets not usually found in war games. The Diplomatic phase sees your statesmen zipping from country to country trying to forge alliances, while the Subversion phase lets you assign troops to disrupt enemy quests.

The Diplomatic phase is the more important of these two because achieving alliances lies at the very heart of this game. During this stage, you're given a list of all neutral nations. Beside each nation appears a series of three numbers. The first shows which nations are aligned (i.e., politically and philosophically) with either side. The second designates how strong the alliance is likely to be if it's successful, and the final number shows how many "diplomatic points" you already have in that country.

When you decide which country would make an ideal ally, begin sending your diplomats to work on this and other alliances by visiting foreign lands. If an alliance succeeds, you immediately gain command of that country's troops, and you can deploy them wherever you wish within their home country.

Maelstrom hexes are at sea. Your fleets should avoid these at all costs if they hope to remain afloat.

One other aspect of *War of the Lance* is completely unlike those found in most war games. In the Quest phase, you send your champions on pilgrimages for magical artifacts.

In the northwest corner of the continent lies North Ergoth, the country with which you're trying to form an alliance.

Slick up your joystick it's hot!

ACTION!

Fight in the city slums...

AMIGA
ATARI ST
PC
CBM 64

A supercop and a black panther team together in a high risk mission."A top cia agent has been kidnapped,find him! You know that action and fighting is inevitable". You'll have to visit the city slums to find him and protect you both from mobsters, punks and riff raffs.

Arrest the captives!

AMIGA
ATARI ST
PC

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Ready to drive and shoot!

AMIGA
ATARI ST
PC

Parked on the side of an interstate in the arizona, you are waiting for your mission in your car. Suddenly comes an APB from your radio: "alert to all units, a fugitive killer has escaped . Use caution." Drive fast to intercept him! Watch out for flat tires and empty fuel tanks. You may leave the road and drive through the desert, use your compass and your map or you will loose your way...Good luck to prove your nickname "the Ranger!!"

Save the world from terrorists!

AMIGA
ATARI ST
PC
CBM 64

You are the pilot of THUNDER MASTER II, the ultimate fighting vehicle able to convert itself into a genuine airborne attacker, equiped with ionic phasers and missile launcher. You are engaged in the hot pursuit of terrorists. Go into combat and be confronted by enemies as different in their appearence as in their combat techniques. Pick up weapons, ammunitions and fuel. Destroy the leading vehicle, before the ultimate explosion!

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THE ACTION CONCEPT

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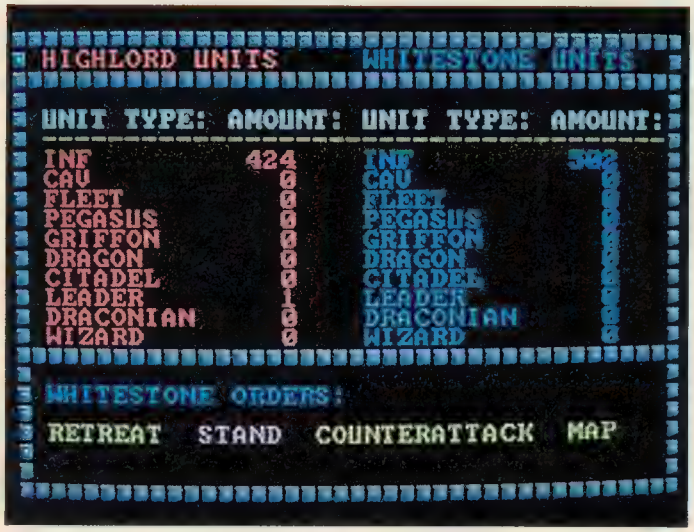
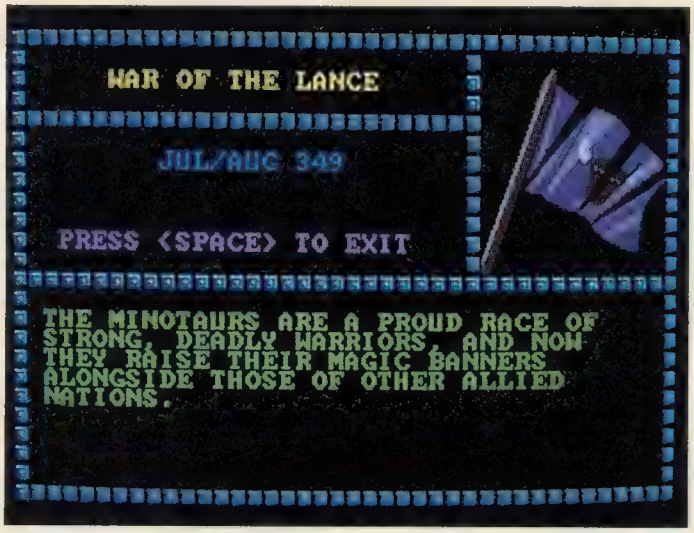


With each battle, you're shown a combat screen listing the forces on each side. Here you may outnumber the enemy army, but they have a leader — unlike you.

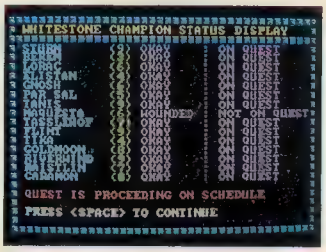

WAR OF THE LANCE
JUL/AUG 349
PRESS <SPACE> TO EXIT
THE MINOTAURS ARE A PROUD RACE OF STRONG, DEADLY WARRIORS, AND NOW THEY RAISE THEIR MAGIC BANNERS ALONGSIDE THOSE OF OTHER ALLIED NATIONS.

Information screens appear after turns are taken. This one reveals some background about the race of minotaurs.

They journey on these quests automatically, but in this phase you can help them if they're wounded or captured. If a champion is injured while he's with the rest of the questing party, you can withdraw the champion from the quest or have him leave the party and seek medical aid.

If the wounded hero is not currently on a quest, you can have him seek aid or rejoin the mission. When a champion is captured by the enemy, you can have him attempt an escape, try to rescue him, or leave him imprisoned for the time being.

The goal of a quest is to collect a magical artifact — such as the dragon orb —



After each Quest phase, this screen updates the status of each champion. Most of these champions are on a quest — some never to return.

which can turn enemy dragons away from a battle. The Whitestone armies can find medallions of faith, which inspire your units, while the evil armies can use Dragon Lord armor. DragonLances double the combat strength of friendly units, but champions must find the pure dragon metal, the Hammer of Kharas, and the Silver Arm of Ergoth to make the DragonLances. There are other artifacts as well, and most are extremely valuable.

DRAGONLANCE FISTICUFFS

Champions are nice to have, but your armies and navies do your real fighting. There is human infantry in this game, but in keeping with the DragonLance world, there are also infantries for ogres, minotaurs, elves, dwarfs, kenders, and hobgoblins. Human cavalry exists, as does draconic cavalry, dragons themselves, pegasi, and griffins.

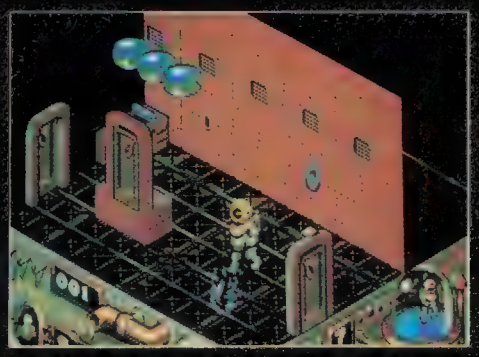
Then again, you might find yourself fighting a powerful wizard or a flying citadel (another DragonLance peculiarity). Furthermore, given the continental scope of the conflict, fleets are also highly important. Each different unit gains advantages in specific situations. Dwarfs and ogres, for example, are at their best when fighting in mountain squares.

What a Zoo!

Treasure Trap

TERRIFYING... The poison-filled tentacles of a gleaming jellyfish suddenly appear in your faceplate. You dodge to the right, leaping to the top of an algae-covered crate. There it is, just inches away—the Esmeralda's gold!

Sidestep stingrays, dodge crabs and elude electric eels as you plunge through 100 multi-level rooms and try to solve the mesmerizing puzzles in this terrifying underwater



It's dinnertime at 50 fathoms, and you're the main course!

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Your office serves as the communications center in this high-powered simulation!

TENNIS CUP

EXHILARATING... Down Love-40, you must break the Australian's serve to survive. He blasts a serve to your forehand. You scramble to the right and return a topspin passing shot down the line. Only four more to go...

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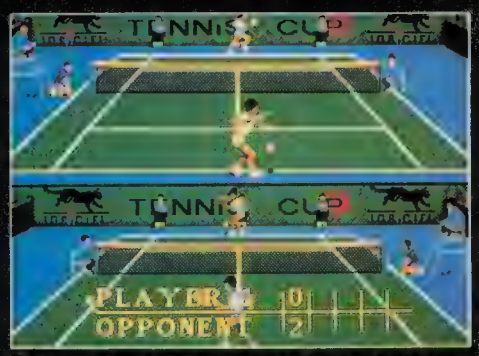

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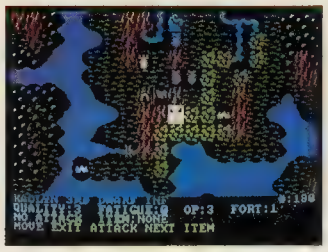

When you "get" a unit, you can move it, attack with it, and so on. Study this screen for a synopsis of the unit's capabilities.

The combat stage begins only after the movement phase is over and you've moved each unit where you wish. The first battle you launch is naval combat, fought between adjacent fleets or, if at least one fleet is on patrol, between fleets within four squares of one another.

Next come land and air battles. For each such battle, the computer displays a screen showing the opposing forces and the menu items Retreat, Light, Heavy, Abort, and Map. Retreating means backing off before battle starts, and is subject to enemy counterattacks. Light and Heavy establish the ferocity of the attack. Aborting means abandoning the fight but remaining in place.

If you're on the defense, you're allowed to Retreat, Counterattack, or Stand. Forces containing dragons have a further menu—Dragon Fear or Attack — depending on how they wish to deploy their dragons. Finally, you're given the option of viewing a graphic display of the battle—enjoyable but time-consuming—or just having the computer present the grisly results.

War of the Lance can be a long game, but its continental scope keeps it interesting. Given that dragons can cover about half the map in one turn, the scope quickly becomes less of an advantage to the defender than it first seems, and you'll find yourself extremely thankful that the infantry is so slow to arrive.

The fascination of this game is its well-designed diplomatic subgame; at several points you'll end a turn almost begging certain nations to come over to your side. And SSI's attention to its audience is welcome: With champions on quests, magic artifacts providing aid, and dragons locked in battle with flying citadels, the vast readership of the DragonLance books will find themselves right at home.

Along with *Sword of Aragon*, *War of the Lance* is one of the most enjoyable pure war games to appear in quite some time.

GP

Two elvish fleets sail out of port to attack a Highlord amphibious force. Your fleets aren't as strong as theirs, but you do have a chance.

The elvish griffin forces try to help their troops against the Highlord attackers. Griffins are powerful, but not perfect.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; EGA or CGA graphics.

DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

WWI Air Combat Simulation

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Mannock, Rickenbacher—and learn their tricks and techniques.

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- Strategy Dogfight: For the skilled purist, Blue Max acts like a highly-intelligent strategic board game, allowing you and your opponent to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
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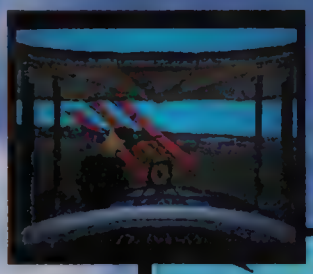

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- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
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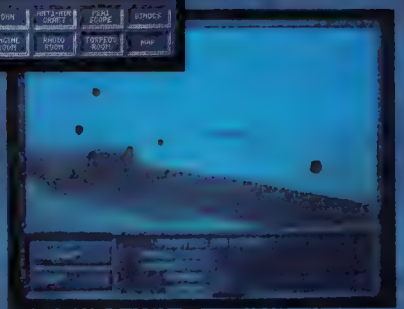
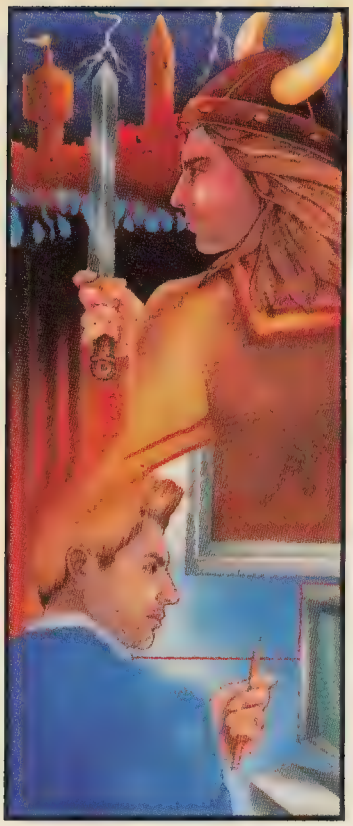
- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal *and* external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 500 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....





ALTERNATE LIVES

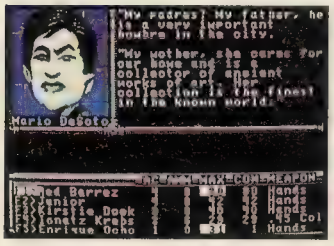
NEIL RANDALL

ON THE (MIAMI) BEACH

Greetings from Miami? Yeah, sure. You're more likely to meet the unattractive man on the right than the young lovelies with him.

Several years ago, *Wasteland* was one of the first computer role-playing games (RPGs) to deal with the popular science-fiction theme of post-holocaust America. The game demonstrated the violence, the mutations, and the weirdness that would accompany any society trying to survive after the bombs fell.

Bad Blood took a highly playable fantasy RPG system and dropped it into a post-holocaust world. It, too, was dominated by bizarre mutants and chaos, but was more accessible to players than *Wasteland*.


"My mother, she cares for our home and is a collector of ancient works of art. Her collection is the finest in the known world."
Mario DeSoto

A chance encounter with Mario DeSoto can produce some interesting results. Be careful, though—he's an important character.

Now comes *Fountain of Dreams*. Like *Wasteland* and *Bad Blood*, this Electronic Arts game is set after World War III. It too has its fair share of weirdness. But *Fountain of Dreams* surpasses *Wasteland* because it takes full advantage of the recent advances in RPG playability. It's as accessible as *Bad Blood*, but in almost all other ways *Bad Blood* and *Fountain of Dreams* are too different to be compared — for one thing, *Fountain of Dreams* shows a great sense of humor.

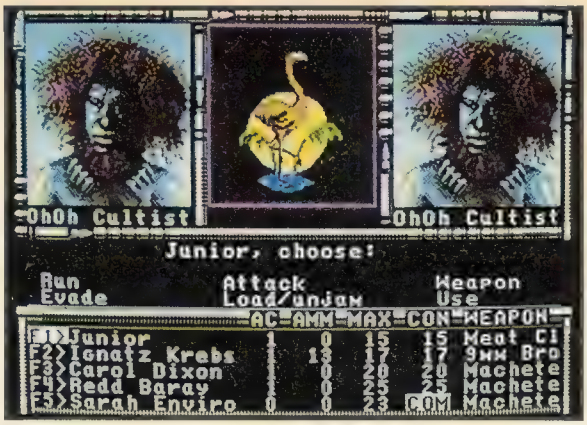
The whole party chooses to attack this dobermutant. Its bite might cause mutation.

Picture Florida as an island after the holocaust, separated from the U.S. mainland by the seismic backlash that followed nuclear hits on Georgia. The Sunshine State escaped total demolition because the attackers wished to keep Cape Canaveral operational for their own purposes. Organic life was decimated by chemical weapons and neutron bombs, but the land remained.

Within 50 years, Florida became a series of city-states — different communities, each considering its own survival to be paramount. Miami has split into several factions. The Miami Police division is lead by that pastel-clad duo, Tockett and Crubbs. Other groups include the bootlegging DeSoto family, the punk-ridden Bahia Mafia, and the voodoo-inspired Obeah Orders. Less organized, but always spoiling for a fight, are the Beachcombers, whose philosophy is to get through each day alive.

Despite Florida's dismal condition, rumors continue to circulate about the Dream Water that can be found somewhere on the island. Not unlike Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth, Dream Water is said to have the power to cleanse mu-

You know that there's a moneybag inside a closet in the DeSoto house, but picking it up may be dangerous — unless you're willing to risk rat bites.



Now these guys are ugly—and dangerous, too. Still, they're not only beatable, but usually have treasure as well.

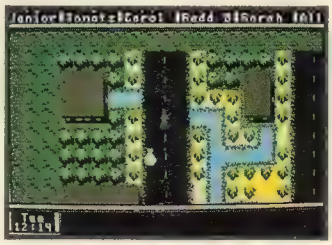
tations. Your quest in *Fountain of Dreams* is to find the source of the Dream Water and use it to clean up Florida. It won't be easy: The fountain is supposedly hidden deep within the treacherous Everglades, guarded by mutated animals of near-human intelligence.

Players familiar with Interplay's *Dragon Wars* will recognize the basis of the *Fountain of Dreams* system. Like *Dragon Wars*, *Fountain of Dreams* is extremely easy to learn. You create characters at the beginning of the game, customizing them by choosing an identity for each—survivalist, vigilante, medic, hood, or mechanic — and adjusting attributes with bonus points. Your party consists of one to three characters, and you recruit others throughout the game until your party includes five members.

Survivalists begin the game with pharmacy and mechanics as active skills, and stealth, firearm handling, and gunsmithing as passive skills. By comparison, hoods begin with lockpicking as an active skill and stealth and firearm handling as passive skills; medics have active medical skills and passive perception and swordsmanship skills; and mechanics and vigilantes have similarly appropriate skills. Active skills must be deliberately attempted whenever the situation is appropriate, while passive skills kick in automatically whenever they're needed.

The beauty of *Fountain of Dreams* lies in its interface. The attributes of the characters — strength, dexterity, charisma, willpower, I.Q., aptitude, and luck — are directly tied to the skills with which characters begin the game. As you adventure, you gain experience points (mostly in combat) and rise in rank. And whenever your rank increases, you gain two bonus points to add to your cumulative attributes.

Both active and passive skills increase as your character uses them, and, like attribute increases, they take effect immediately. In other words, there's no "training session," as in most RPGs. You use your skills and they get better. No muss, no fuss.



Following a battle on the Miami streets, a bag of treasure lies waiting for you. Walk towards it and see what it offers.

The only downside here lies in the distribution of experience points. Money in *Fountain of Dreams* is automatically shared by the party, but, for some reason, experience points aren't. Only the character delivering the final blow receives experience points for destroying an enemy — even if another character has done most of the work. This means that only your best fighters collect the vast majority of the experience points for fighting.

Fountain of Dreams doesn't offer a first-person perspective. Instead, you move the Party icon around an overhead map of either the entire island or, more often, closeups of particular locations. The scale of the map changes frequently, depending on where you are. Enter Miami, for instance, and you walk down streets — enter buildings (or the DeSoto compound), and the scale drops to the size of individual rooms. No mapping is necessary — a relief to many RPG players.

There are many characters on the island who will join your party if asked. In fact, you can drop one character in favor of another. You may "store" these nonessential characters in your home compound or in other, hidden places, but be sure to remember where you put them.

The most controversial design element of *Fountain of Dreams* is that the game changes automatically — and permanently — as you play. Although you can save your progress manually, the game saves itself at important places. So there are no experiments in *Fountain of Dreams*, no fun kamikaze maneuvers just to see what happens — because you may not be able to restore the game from the point where you last saved it. Instead, you may find yourself already enmeshed in your badly thought-out experiment.

OK, this system may be more like real life, and fortunately there *are* places (such as the Pit) where you can get out of a sticky situation by rebooting. But if you really want to save a game, the best thing to do is copy the entire game to a subdirectory or another disk.

Fountain of Dreams is a strong entry in the new style of computer RPGs. These games, which include *Dragon Wars* and *Dark Heart of Uukrull*, are easy to learn, but still take a long time to complete. They also require a commitment from their players — not a commitment of time, necessarily, but a commitment to irrevocable action. So forget experimentation, and stick to the decisions you must make in order to survive.

You can be healed in the doctor's clinic, and, if you're good enough, he'll even teach you how to be a medic. It all costs money, but he's one of the good guys.

GP

THE DESKTOP GENERAL

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT WAR GAMES — AND THEN SOME

Dr. Peter Perla, game player extraordinaire and author of The Art of Wargaming.

War game enthusiasts, as a whole, are a fraternal bunch. Whether you started the hobby 25 years ago with those wonderful Avalon Hill board games, or just last year, when you were shopping for your first PC and couldn't resist picking up that copy of *M1 Tank Platoon* or *Battle of Britain*, you share certain passions with thousands of other game players.

And yet, industry statistics prove that most of us play war games alone. The overwhelming majority of dedicated war gamers also regard themselves as non-violent — even pacifistic — individuals.

Are we just kidding ourselves in some deep psychological sense? Is it really *possible* to be a non-violent person and still delight in the electronic slaughter of *Empire* or *Battles of Napoleon*? Are we closet megalomaniacs, or what?

In short, *why* do people play war games? What do we really get out of it? Are there real intellectual justifications for grown adults playing soldier on a $2,500 machine designed to process words and generate spreadsheets?

Probably the most succinct, elegant answer to those questions was penned by the great English writer H.G. Wells in his 1912 classic about tabletop wargaming, *Little Wars*:

> *How much better is this amiable miniature than the Real Thing! Here is a homeopathic remedy for the imaginative strategist. Here is the premeditation, the thrill, the strain of accumulating victory or disaster — and no smashed or sanguinary bodies, no shattered fine buildings, no devastated countrysides, no petty cruelties, none of that awful universal boredom and embitterment, that tiresome delay or stoppage or embarrassment of every gracious, bold, sweet and charming thing, that we who are old enough to remember a real modern war know to be the reality of belligerence.*

Contemporary war game expert Peter P. Perla sums it up directly: "...war gamers seek information, understanding, and (be honest now!) glory."

Because good war games cast light on the human factor in warfare, exploring all those messy unquantifiable questions that strict operational analysis must ignore, Perla concludes that war games are useful — to both the lay player and the military professional alike — because they "teach us what we didn't know."

Time and time again, while reading through Perla's new book, *The Art of Wargaming* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 364 pp., $29.95), I found myself underlining forceful and illuminating passages such as those just quoted. For game players whose interest in their hobby goes beyond the gaming experience itself, Perla's book is a gold mine of information and thought-provoking analysis.

I'll go further: Not only is it the best book on wargaming since H.G. Wells' post-Edwardian classic, but it also packs more information about

Officers at the Naval War College playing a war game in 1895. Note the map of Cuba on the wall behind them, as well as the two Chinese men! (Photo courtesy of U.S. Naval War College)

the history and nature of wargaming than any other book you can find, in or out of print.

Dr. Perla, like many war gamers, got his start in his teens as a fan of Avalon Hill and a dedicated collector of all those path-breaking games James Dunnigan used to publish every month in the late, lamented *Strategy and Tactics* magazine.

His first published writing on war games appeared in the fan press of the early 1970s, but he became a recognized professional when he wrote his doctoral thesis on a mathematical model of combat. He is now resident war games theoretician at the Center for Naval Analyses, just outside of Washington, D.C.

His book is roughly divided into three parts. Part one details the history of wargaming, both professional and hobbyist; part two explores the fundamental principles of wargaming and offers suggestions about how wargaming can best be used; and part three discusses the cross-fertilization between the playability that hobbyists seek and the fine-grained realism that professionals need in order to draw real-life conclusions from their war games.

In each of these areas, Perla has amassed a wealth of fascinating detail and stimulating trains of thought. No matter how long you've been playing war games or reading about them, you'll surely find much here that is new and inciting.

Most hardcore gamers know, for example, that the great-grandfather of modern board games was a system called *Kriegsspiel*, introduced in 1824 by a Prussian artillery officer named von Reisswitz. But how many of us would know without reading Perla's account that the success of von Reisswitz' system proved his undoing?

So enthusiastically was *Kriegsspiel* adopted by the Prussian court that envious professional rivals conspired to have von Reisswitz banished from court and posted to a remote, hopelessly dreary fortress-town where, only three years after his sudden ascension to fame, the despondent young man committed suicide.

In his discussion of the interaction between professional war gaming and actual wartime operations, Perla explodes at least one old myth — that the Japanese held a war game simulation of the Battle of Midway and suffered a defeat comparable to their real one, only to have the game results blindsided by a prejudiced referee.

The war game defeat, Perla points out, was based on the Imperial fleet being devastated by B-17 raids from the island, and the judge in question was absolutely right to declare those results unacceptable. As it happened, of course, the numerous B-17 strikes from Midway proved to be little more than a nuisance.

War game hobbyists will be fascinated by Perla's behind-the-scenes glimpses of the high-stakes wargaming that goes on in the armed services' think-tanks. He discusses how different techniques and philosophies have shaped American defense policy down through the years.

Perhaps the meatiest segment of the book is the author's thoughtful and expert analysis of how a good war game should be designed, and what can be learned by those who play it. "In its design and structure," he writes, "it is a tool for the modeling and exploration of human decision processes in the context of military action; in its play, it is the use of the tool to carry out such research."

As for that ambiguity so many of us feel — or are *made* to feel by those who see wargaming as an activity that glorifies violence — Perla believes that anyone who refights the crucial battles of the past or the speculative ones of the future with a war game will develop, not lose, his or her sensitivity to the waste and slaughter of actual warfare.

His remarkable book includes this eloquent summation:

H.G. Wells, in straw boater, sets up a war game on his lawn around 1912.

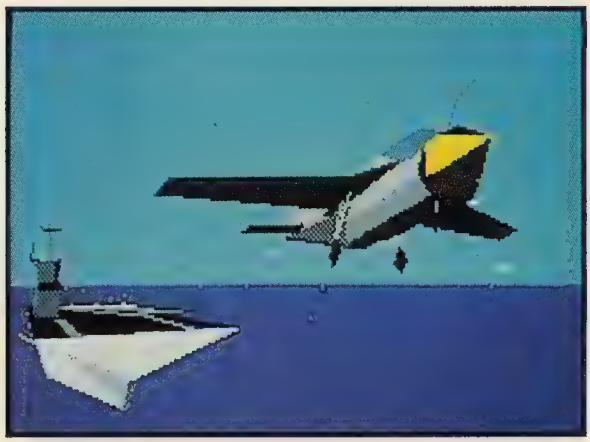
The war game gives us a chance to play at one of the most terrible creations of the hand of man.... Most importantly, it gives us a chance to reduce some of our terror of the beast long enough to bring to bear against it the one weapon that, ultimately, is our final and only defense — our reason.

GP

VIRTUAL REALITY

ARLAN LEVITAN

PARDON THE INTRUSION



Carrier takeoffs and landings can prove your mettle as a pilot.

It's four in the morning, and a local radio talk show is rife with callers arguing the merits of U.S. military involvement in the Persian Gulf. In the space of an hour, the listeners have run the gamut from "nuke 'em" to "get out now." The show's guest, a military analyst, remarks in passing that most people in the United States are under the mistaken impression that an armed conflict in the Gulf would be swift and decisive, like Grenada or Panama. Does anyone else have deja vu?

Spectrum HoloByte's *Flight of the Intruder*, based on the Stephen Coonts bestseller of the same name, is an aerial combat simulation that goes far beyond the ordinary armchair-general grind that has flooded the market lately. Besides being a multi-faceted simulation of Navy air operations during the Vietnam War, *Intruder* provides a wealth of insights into the difficulties faced by U.S. naval flyers during "limited" conflicts.

Flight of the Intruder is set aboard an aircraft carrier off the coast of North Vietnam in 1972. The object of the simulation seems straightforward enough: to complete assigned air combat missions with minimum losses of equipment and personnel.

Although I'm notoriously ham-fisted when it comes to jet-jockeying, I had little difficulty with *Intruder's* aircraft as I took to the air as my choice of fighter or bomber pilot. Taking off from the carrier, flying, and navigation are easy enough for beginners, and a short section on aerial combat tricks and maneuvers in the manual imparts enough useful information to brace you for dealing with enemy MiGs and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).

It may surprise experienced air simulation players that the keyboard is better for commands than a joystick or mouse. At the lower levels of flight proficiency, the aircraft is relatively forgiving. But getting back to home base is another matter altogether.

As Coonts recalls in his book, the act of landing on an aircraft carrier is little more than a controlled crash. You may have to rely on your craft's autopilot frequently during your carrier landing approaches to keep from littering the ocean and flight deck with pieces of your plane.

Intruder has all of the niceties you can expect from advanced flight simulations. There are multiple views of the action, and a video option that can be turned on in mid-flight, allowing you to replay critical portions of your flight after the mission. Or if you have a fellow aviator with his or her own computer, multi-player games can be played via modem or

direct cable to your computer's serial port.

Spectrum HoloByte recommends using a turbo XT as a minimal hardware platform for *Intruder*. Right. XT owners are advised to limit the amount of surface detail rendered to keep things crawling semi-smoothly. If you want to use *Intruder's* digitized sound effects or an Ad-Lib compatible sound card, you'll need a 12 Mhz AT or better. *Intruder* does makes good use of VGA and EGA color graphics, and CGA mode is also offered.

Missions over North Vietnam can be extremely tense.

Once the basics of flight are mastered, you're free to assume the headaches of the CAG (Commander Air Group) of a carrier-based group of F-4 Phantom fighters and A-6 Intruder bombers. A number of life-threatening operations are provided. Since it's your funeral, you're also free to plan, create, and orchestrate operations of your own.

Each operation can consist of up to four missions, with each mission assigned to a pair of aircraft. In a single operation, for example, one group of Phantoms can be assigned to provide air cover over the carrier, while another group acts as an escort for two flights of bombers, each flight having separate targets.

The CAG can fly any of the aircraft involved in a mission and can actually switch planes in mid-mission—which allows the gung-ho to be always in the thick of the action. For example, on one mission I took off in an Intruder, switched over to a Phantom (which was providing cover) to dogfight with enemy incomings, hopped back to the Intruder to make the bomb run, and then went back to a Phantom for a quick run to the 7-11 (I needed a cup of coffee).

Intruder has so much depth that the number of options and controls provided may seem somewhat bewildering at first. Fortunately, a paperback copy of Coonts's novel is included with the simulation. While it may take several days to read the book, doing so provides a solid base for understanding the mechanics of the job at hand — and it relieves much of the pain associated with familiarizing yourself with a bewildering array of military acronyms and slang.

The book does have one intriguing aspect that is lacking in the simulation. A number of missions in the book take place at night, an option which *Intruder*, regrettably, doesn't support.

During any armed conflict, the options available to U.S. pilots may be restricted by "Rules of Engagement." For maximum realism, you can play *Intruder* under the same rules that were in effect for much of the Vietnam War. Once those rules are invoked, *Intruder* sheds what little "take to the skies and blast 'em" character it has and turns into a tense conflict management.

You fly and fight under the same restrictions that crippled naval fliers in the Vietnam campaign. MiGs can be attacked only when they are airborne and have been visually identified as unfriendlies. Only those targets assigned prior to takeoff can be attacked. No "targets of opportunity" may be struck. Anti-aircraft, SAM, and ground-control radar installations may not be shot at unless their radar has "pinged" you.

Flight of the Intruder does not glorify war. Instead, it instills a much deeper understanding of the difficulties and frustrations experienced by U.S. aviators during a time that tried the will and conscience of a nation. Like the Vietnam War, *Flight of the Intruder* offers no final resolution of conflict. Perhaps therein lies its message.

GP

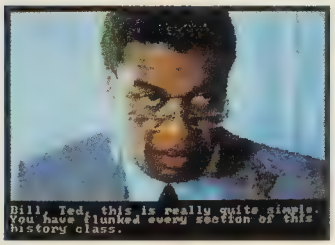
Your A-6 Intruder is equipped with Heads-Up Display targeting.

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

GARY MEREDITH

Rufus may be only a time bum, but he does speak the truth. And Bill and Ted probably always take advice from men who look like famous comedians.

There's something strange afoot at the local convenience store. Although Bill and Ted didn't really expect the unexpected at their favorite hangout, the night they met Rufus was one for the books ... literally. In order to keep the airheaded duo from flunking their high-school history course — and thereby changing the course of history — Rufus, a wandering time traveler, dropped in on the boys in his time machine/phone booth to insure that they would make an A on their final history paper.

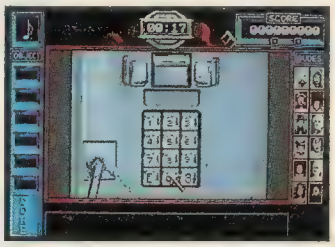


Your history teacher means business. If Bill and Ted don't get an A on their term papers, they'll be partying in summer school — and the course of history will be changed.

In *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* from **Capstone**, you take Rufus' time booth on a joyride through time, trying to round up historically significant dudes and dudettes for a term-paper presentation in the school auditorium. Depending on the skill level you choose, you must bag either six or 12 characters. But every time you collect two characters, you have to return to 1990 or risk overloading the four-man phone booth.

A display on the right side of the screen tags each character and notes whether he or she is in the time booth or has already been dropped off in 1990. For safekeeping, drop all your historic figures in the San Dimas Mall until you have the required number to complete your paper.

The Circle K convenience store has been a home away from home for these dudes. There's not much going on here now, but you may want to return once you reach the upper levels.



Unless you've got a good head for dates in history, you should consult the time directory Rufus thoughtfully left in the time booth.

If you've seen the movie of the same name, then this game won't be strange to you. Indeed, the digitized images and voices of the original actors are included in the adventure — although after you've heard the characters exclaim "Excellent!" 30 or 40 times, you may wish the game had no voice chip.

In the lower, easier levels, most of the historic figures follow Bill and Ted to the time booth without causing problems. But there are a few characters who must be coerced into accompanying our heroes.

Sometimes it's easy to figure out what will lure a character back to the booth. For example, a fire extinguisher is just the thing to charm Joan of Arc — especially since she's not exactly cooling her heels when you find her. When you discover music notes, it's logical to take them to Ludwig von Beethoven to see if he's suffering from composer's block, while Nero can't wait to learn to play the violin you found under Michelangelo's statue. And the Lincoln penny you picked up in ancient Greece is just the thing to persuade that president to make the trip to San Dimas.

(Perhaps the only time logic is abandoned is when you find that Genghis Khan must be offered some Twinkies before he'll come along. Or is it indeed a little-known fact that all ruthless Mongol leaders have a weakness for fluffy cake tubes stuffed with creme?)

The upper levels of *Bill & Ted* are just a bit trickier — mainly because there are more items to uncover and locations to visit. Traveling to the last Ice Age, Bill and Ted emerge from the booth to find a vast expanse of white, and not much else. But if they had thought to snag an icepick at the Circle K before stepping into the booth, something might turn up amidst all that frozen water. In another

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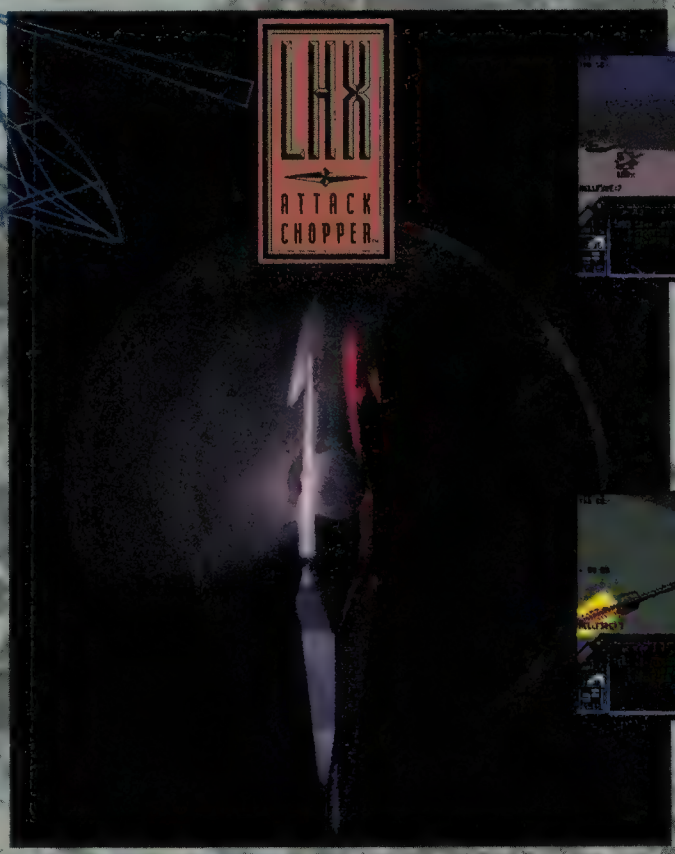

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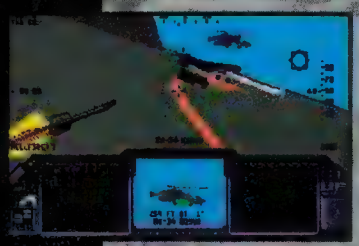

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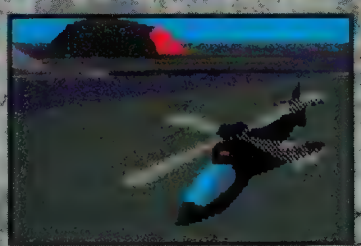

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BY BRENT IVERSON

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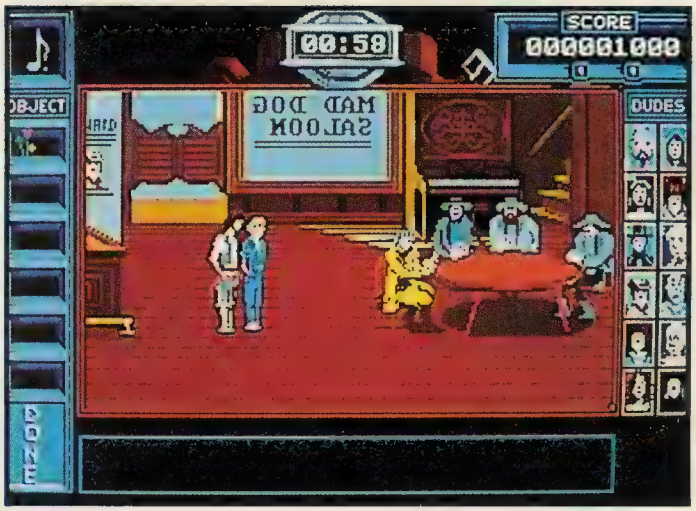
ELECTRONIC ARTS®



Now that he's been caught cheating at poker, Billy the Kid is only too happy to accompany Bill and Ted. But first the duo must punch out the Kid's fellow card players.

scenario, the San Dimas of 1,000,000 B.C. is populated with cavemen striving to discover fire. A flick of their Bic might earn the duo a valuable item in return.

But while logic prevails in most of the scenarios, others prove to be exercises in frustration. A good example is your trip to visit Socrates in 410 B.C. Before the boys can bag the good philosopher, they must obtain the answer to a question he poses. The Temple of the Oracle at Delphi may be only a short hop from Athens, but it lies at the very top of a mountain at the end of a narrow, tortuous path.

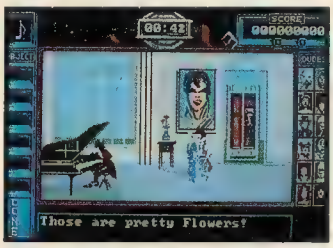
The Maid of Orleans will be eternally grateful to our boys — but only if they brought something with them to put a damper on this cookout.

And as if that weren't enough, you also must pick up coins along the path as a tribute to the oracle. It's all too easy to fall off the path — especially when you're trying to reach some of the more inaccessible coins. And you'll quickly grow tired of hearing the boys yell "bogus" (which sounds more like "oogus") every time they fall. Fortunately, however, there are no death scenes in *Bill & Ted*. If you're in a critical situation, you just return to the phone booth with no penalty other than the time you've lost.

You may end up pulling out your hair in 1793 France as well. In order to rescue Marie Antoinette from the Bastille, you must thread your way through a maze patrolled by several guards. Even in the easy lower levels, this maze can be tough.

Once a guard has seen you, there's simply no escape. In fact, sometimes the guards don't even *have* to see you to nab you. In some areas they apparently can see and travel through solid walls. It hardly seems fair to give the guards X-ray vision and the ability to materialize at will.

If you're looking for a game in the mold of Origin's *Ultima* series, or any of Sierra's *Quest*



Ludwig needs a few notes, and the boys could use those flowers. The blossoms might be quite helpful in dealing with a certain psychoanalyst's mother.

You're going to hate yourself when you finally discover the answer to this question. Still, Bill and Ted must visit the oracle before Socrates will return to 1990 with them.

offerings, you won't find it in *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. While there is a touch of the traditional role-playing adventure, everything is really too oversimplified to present much of a challenge. There are a few arcade sequences where good hand-eye coordination comes in handy, but your advanced brain functions certainly won't get much of a workout. The modified Valley vocabulary of the heroes may also have you disabling your computer's sound.

But what you do have in *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* is a very colorful, humorous, and easy-to-play game that follows areas already charted by the movie quite closely. So if you liked the movie, you'll probably find the computer game "most excellent."

GP

Hardware requirements: 384K minimum memory (256K for CGA); VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; hard drive recommended; joystick optional; supports sound boards.

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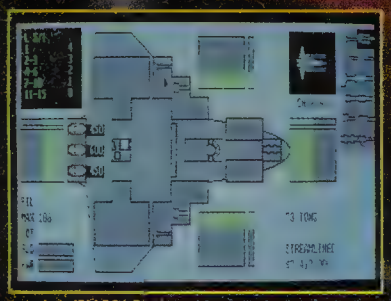

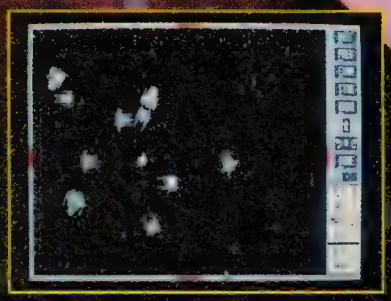

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THE PUNISHER

STEVE HUDSON

The characters created by Marvel Comics have been popular for generations of readers. Now those fans, as well as fans of arcade games, can enjoy *The Punisher*, **Paragon Software's** third game based on Marvel Comics characters. Like its predecessors, *Spider-Man and Captain America in Dr. Doom's Revenge*, and *X-Men: Madness in Murderworld*, this new game lets you portray a popular comic-book hero.

In *The Punisher*, you're Frank Castle, model citizen and family man. You're also a veteran Marine, skilled in no-nonsense combat, and a candidate for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But when your family is murdered before your eyes, the trauma drives you into seclusion. When you emerge, it's as The Punisher. This plot introduction is told in classic comic-book form at the beginning of the game.

When driving your battle van, stay alert. Your rugged urban vehicle draws a lot of attention from the local hoods.

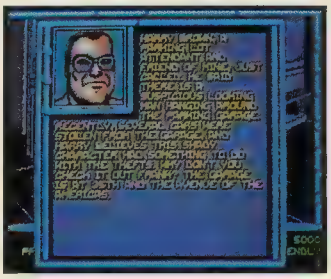
As The Punisher, your job involves "the dark side of justice — the side that doesn't care for Miranda Rights, search warrants, or circumstantial evidence." Any villain is fair game. Lately, however, one man in particular has been occupying your thoughts: Kingpin, a seven-foot, 450-pound reprobate. He's at the root of New York crime, and you're on the brink of getting him.

There's just one problem — you've got to find him first. An informant wants $500,000 to reveal Kingpin's location. You must come up with the cash, and quickly, too, since Kingpin will be moving in less than two weeks. How to raise the dough? By taking on more crime-busting jobs for the Trust, the mysterious group that pays you for your brand of justice. Sure, $500,000 means a lot of overtime. But that's OK — you like your job.

Each mission of *The Punisher* opens with you getting another assignment in your New Jersey warehouse headquarters. Then it's off to the scene of the crime in your urban battle van, equipped with a four-barrel mini-gun, grenade launcher, and a deluxe throw-'em-off-the-trail smokescreen generator. The van never runs out of gas or ammo, requires very little steering, and can make perfect U-turns at 150 miles per hour — a commuter's dream.

As you drive to the job, you're assaulted by an endless stream of ne'er-do-wells intent on causing your demise. Your response? Blast 'em, of course. Although this doesn't earn any money for your coffers, it does give you that warm feeling inside.

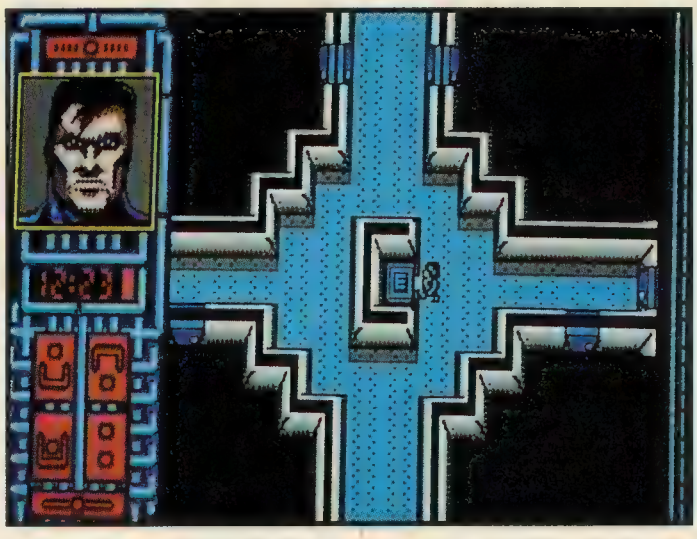
If you want some exercise and don't feel like driving, forego the van and walk to the case. Interestingly enough, walking takes much less time than driving. But the fastest way to be on-the-spot is to hitch a ride and zip directly to the right part of town. Many players will prefer to stick out their thumbs and hitch directly to the heart of the game.



Microchip, the Punisher's most trustworthy friend, delivers mission briefings, which usually include information regarding location. This information can then be used to go directly to the crime scene.

You may need to don scuba gear at the crime scene and take to the water, but most crime fighting is done on dry land. A scrolling overhead view shows where you are as you interrogate passersby, explore maze-like buildings, and blast open an occasional locked door with a grenade or a burst from your M-16. It's fun, but keep your finger on the trigger in case the bad guys suddenly show up.

What happens when they do? We've already told you — you blast 'em, of course. Their

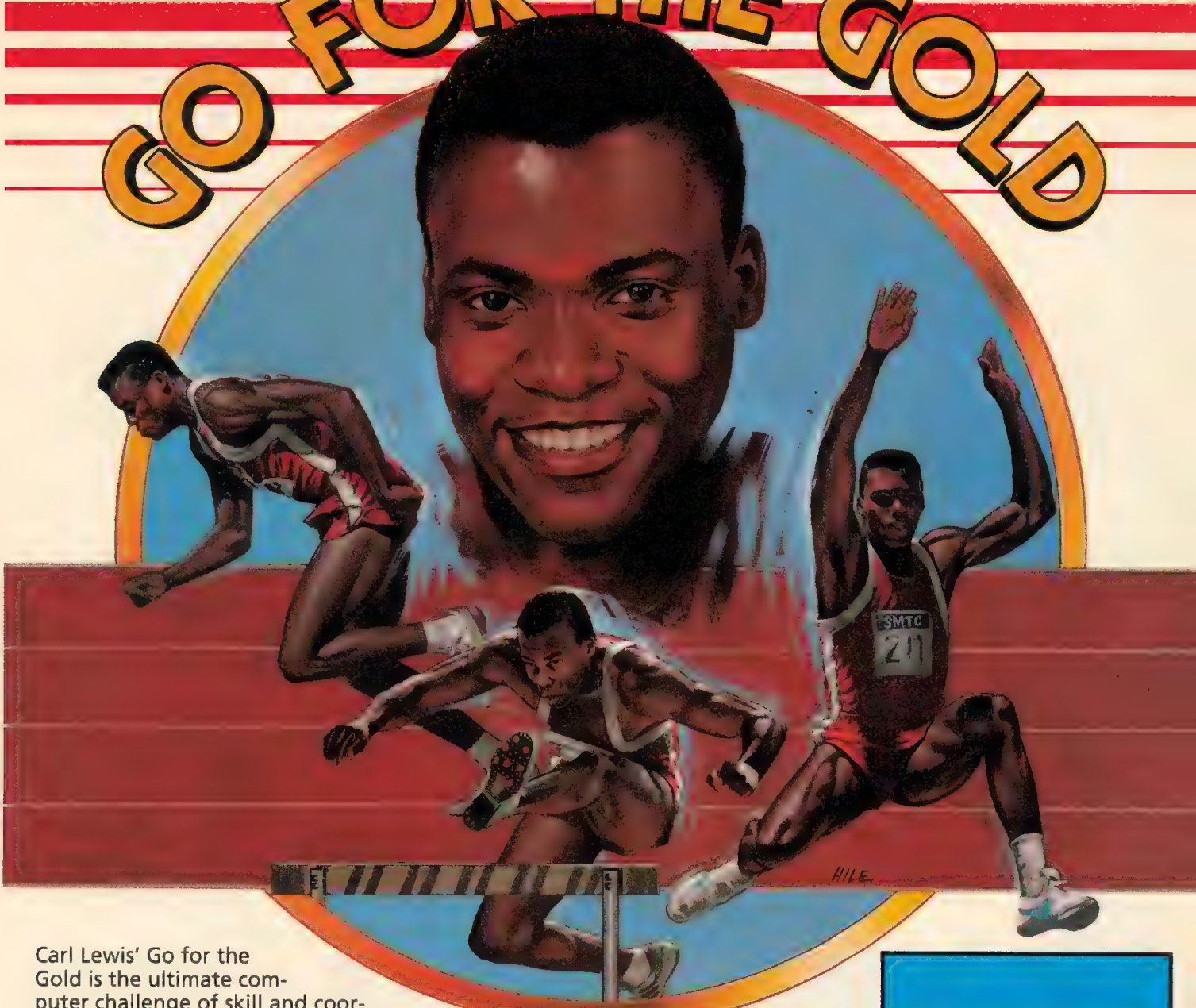


The Punisher uses grenades or firearms to blast open closed doors. Be careful, though — ricochets or concussion can cause injury. As damage accumulates, the picture of The Punisher in the upper left gradually changes to that of a skull.

OLYMPIC DECATHLON COMPETITION

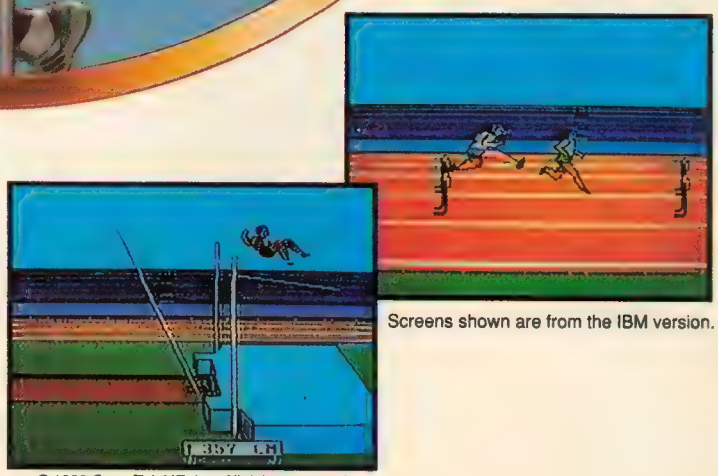
Carl Lewis

GO FOR THE GOLD



Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold is the ultimate computer challenge of skill and coordination. Compete in the Decathlon against Carl Lewis-the six time Olympic Gold medalist-or you can be Carl Lewis and try to live up to his world renowned reputation.

So, if you think that you're up to it; give it a try-Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold. It's guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.



Screens shown are from the IBM version.

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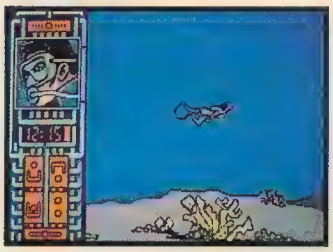


Besides exploring the streets of Manhattan, you need to check out the action around the Hudson River docks. Boats are a favorite place for criminal activity — as you soon discover.

dead bodies remain where they fall, and are there even when you visit the same area later in the game. Search their bodies to commandeer any weapons and add their money to your informant fund. You can also confiscate any drugs a baddie is carrying. Naturally, The Punisher never uses the drugs himself.

Initially, you may find missions difficult to complete, since the criminals are able foes. But as you get the hang of things, your skills increase. You'll be able to bust more bad guys, and your war chest will grow richer by the day. Eventually, you'll amass that half-million bucks — and when you do, you can select the "Hunt Kingpin" option. You only get one crack at him, and he's a formidable opponent, so get it right the first time.

How does *The Punisher* come across? Two key areas — graphics and playability — are worthy of comment. The game's graphics are good (particularly in VGA), but the quality of the animation varies from one part of the game to the next. Most bothersome is the view from the battle van, which reveals a landscape that scrolls by in noticeable jerks. The van's weapon systems have bumpy responses, too — part of an overall lack of smoothness in this part of the game that experienced arcade players may find annoying.

True, the manual notes that this part of the game was designed to emphasize combat over realism. But this particular warrior would like to see smoother motion and precise responses in the targeting system at the very least.

When you go underwater, things improve. The action is viewed from the side, and the animation is more elaborate. The bottom scrolls smoothly as you work your way along the shoreline, beneath piers, or near boats.

The Kingpin's sinister visage appears whenever The Punisher meets an untimely end.

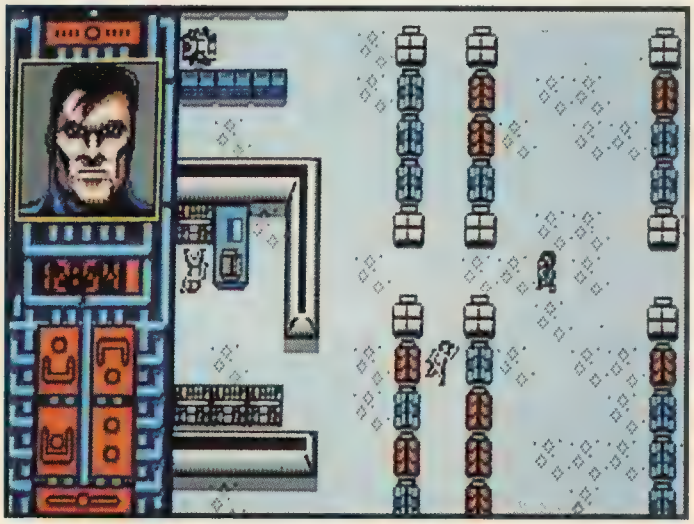
But it's when you set out on foot that the graphics really shine. The overhead views are realistic right down to the shadows, and the endless variation of settings puts you on the edge of your seat every time you open a door. You may even find yourself skipping the driving sequences altogether so that you can get right to the action on the streets.

What about playability? Well, the icon-based interface seems dauntingly complex — especially at first. That's because some of the icons have no obvious correlation to any particular action. Graphics-style icons are great, but only if the icon has some easily interpreted form.

The boxed dialogue and narrative is clearer, although adding labels would certainly help the learning curve. Playability would also be enhanced by removing the annoying look-up-the-word copy protection scheme. Legitimate users will find it an aggravation; dishonest users will simply copy the manual at the same time they copy the disk.

Overall, however, *The Punisher* has enough going for it to make game play thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining. It's a glorious romp into the world of the comic-book superhero, and it may be just the thing to satisfy that long-forgotten urge.

GP



A fight in the bus station leaves casualties all over the place. The bodies of the dead criminals will stay put during the rest of the game.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory (640K for Tandy); VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; supports sound boards.

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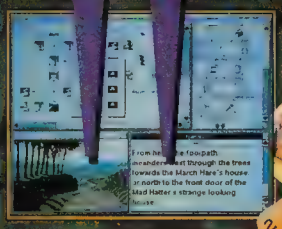
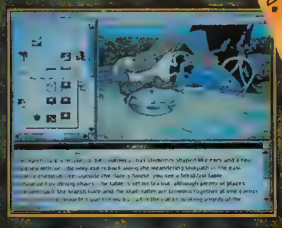
But Wonderland isn't just a bewitching story. It's playing environment breaks new ground for computer adventures. Here's what the editor of Computer Gaming World has to say about it!

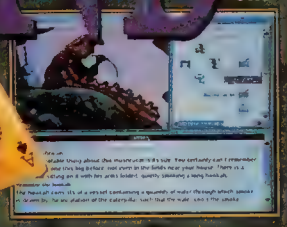
"The game is neither strictly a text adventure nor can it be described as a graphic adventure. It is its own genre... The game uses multi-tasking to offer an incredible array of features..."

Besides superb graphics and sound support, Wonderland's unique windowing environment offers pull-down verb and noun menus, graphics you can size up or down and move around the screen, automated mapping, point-and-click object manipulation, a compass for directional movement, and extensive on-screen help.

"Innovative," "ambitious" (The Chicago Tribune), "exquisite and impressive" (CGW), "brilliant and insane" (The Electronic Gamer), are more words used to describe Wonderland. Questbusters calls its windowed universe "the ultimate interface." Stunning graphics, impressive sound board support and a captivating story, all in a sophisticated new windowing system, combine to make Wonderland the richest adventure ever: a game to play, to tell, and to inhabit.







Screens taken from IBM VGA version.
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QUESTMASTER:

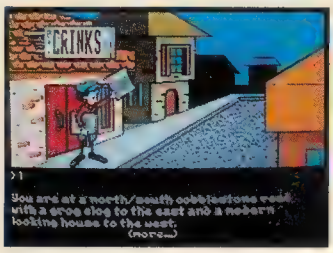
PRISM OF HEHEUTOTOL

NEIL RANDALL

Will this scarecrow be any help at all? Is he perhaps wearing something of use to you? Or is he merely in search of a brain?

From the publishers of last year's popular *A Fool's Errand* comes another puzzle-adventure: *Questmaster: The Prism of Heheutotol*. With its cartoon-style, extremely tongue-in-cheek graphics, *Questmaster* promises to be fun, colorful, and irreverent: a game that looks suitable for children – but ain't.

Since *Questmaster* is an illustrated text adventure, your only action consists of typing commands onto the screen; the computer analyzes your commands in order to respond. Like earlier text adventures such as *Zork*, *Deadline*, *Trinity*, *Mindwheel*, and a host of others, *Questmaster* puts the burden of success squarely on your shoulders. For those used to such games it's a pleasant enough interface, but for players preferring wholly graphic interfaces (i.e., joysticks and menus), this type of interface can very quickly become frustrating.



A newspaper boy offers you a paper in town. Don't just steal one — you might be able to purchase one later.

Although *Questmaster* shares the command-line approach of those text adventures mentioned above, it's actually much closer to adventures such as *The Pawn* or *Guild of Thieves*. In those games, as in *Questmaster*, a detailed graphic accompanies each new screen.

You can get rid of the graphics whenever you wish in order to speed up game play. But, as in all of these games, the graphics are good enough to keep them on-screen. The graphics in *Questmaster* range from the amusingly gruesome to the amusingly suggestive — with "amusingly" always the operative word.

The game's plot sounds quite serious. Dondra, the world of the Elders, was a place of harmony and tranquility. War was unheard of, and no one had questioned the authority of the Elders for a century. But in 2199, the evil Colnar began to rebel and to try to dominate the universe.

When Colnar reaches Dondra, he begins brainwashing the people of a nearby town, as well as killing the inhabitants of the City of the Elders. Using telepathy, the Elders manage to tell of their plight before they're slain.

That's where you come in. Your race of Tellasiens are allies of the Elders who must try to defeat the evil Colnar. Your mission — although you're not exactly sure what it is — takes you to Ardnod (Dondra spelled backwards), where you start to look around. Your actual goal is to find the Crystal Prism of Heheutotol and return it to its starting location; but even if you don't know that, you're bound to have a good time just wandering around. Besides, who needs to know about goals and strategies at the start of a text adventure?

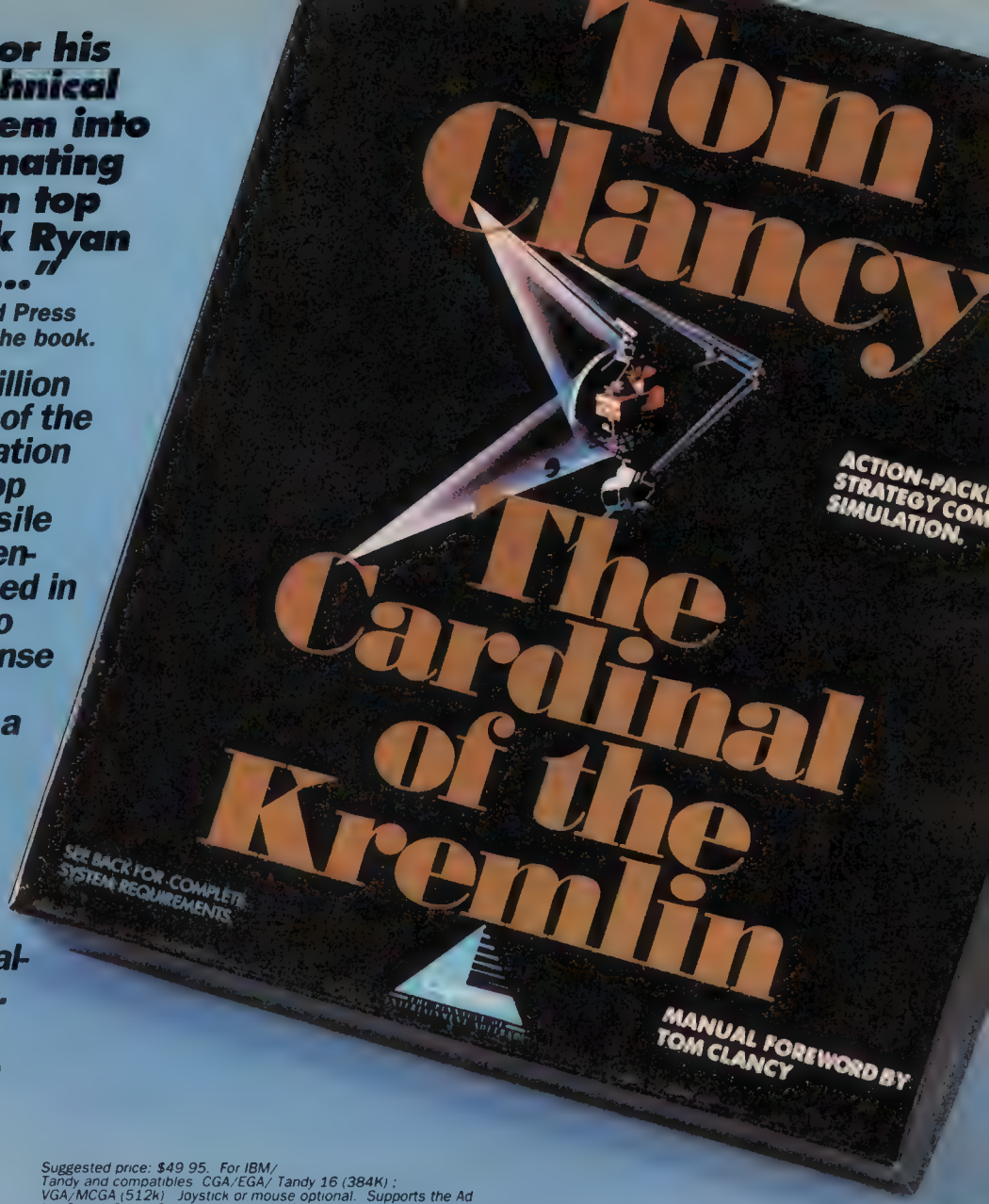
One of the best features in *Questmaster* is your ability to save the character and use it in future *Questmaster* modules as they're published. When you complete the *Prism* quest, you're granted a special power that is saved with your character on the disk. Then, when you purchase the next *Questmaster* adventure, you can resume that character's life — complete with the new power — and solve a new quest.

But in the first installment of *Questmaster*, you meet a green drunk with something to give you. You run across a statue of a bird and find something you need nearby. There's a cross inside a hut, but if you look inside the stove, you might

As lionesses go, this one is pretty sexy. Of course, she's also pretty deadly. Don't dally — just keep going.

"Clancy is known for his abilities to take technical details and weave them into a gripping and fascinating story. Here, he is in top form as he takes Jack Ryan through his paces..."

— Associated Press
— review of the book.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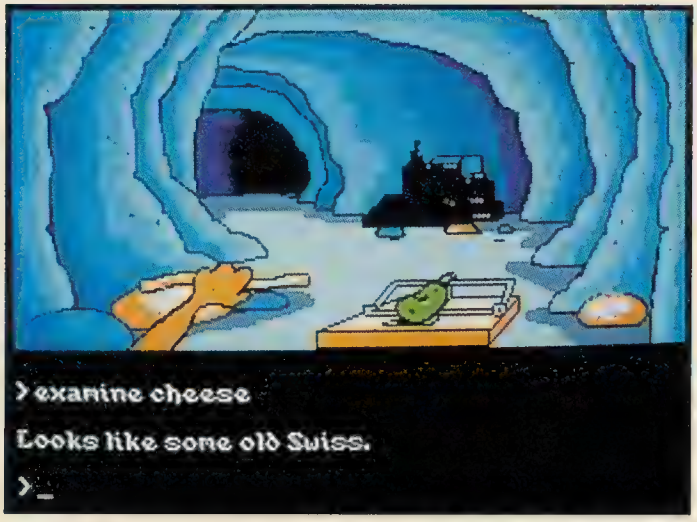
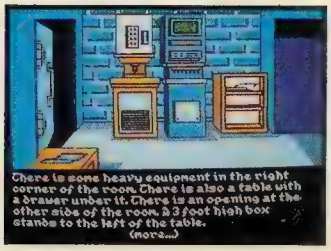


Now that you're a mouse, your nose has led you to this Swiss cheese. Your problem is how to spring the trap without becoming a former mouse.


There is some heavy equipment in the right corner of the room. There is also a table with a drawer under it. There is an opening at the other side of the room. A 3 foot high box stands to the left of the table.
(more...)

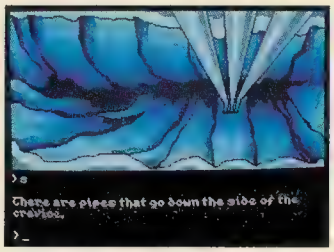
Once past the crevice (you'll need a makeshift bridge), you find a number of important items. Take them all — but read the instructions carefully.

wish you hadn't. You encounter a very sexy lioness who leads you to a highly suspect fruit vine. You even become a mouse at one point, tempted by a delicious morsel of cheese in a deadly mousetrap. Oh, yes — ladders aren't always used vertically.

Here's one solid clue, though, which is offered because it stumped this reviewer for hours. Early in the adventure, you meet a wildebeest with mauling on its mind. The only way past it is to drink something. But don't make a mistake and drink the container instead.

The designers of *Questmaster* have gone to considerable lengths to minimize the frustration usually experienced in playing text adventures. For example, you can get a fair idea of your location by looking in various directions without actually going in them. In other words, if you're lost, you can type "look west" — you'll see in that direction without having to go there.

Another user-friendly element is your ability to enter multiple commands in the same text line. As an example, the manual suggests: "Take key. Open north door. Push key north. Say 'Death to Dondra.' Go south." When you're going through a section you've already completed, turn off the graphics and enter these multiple commands. Things will go much faster.



The crevice goes a long way down, and your climbing ability isn't that great. Is there anything else you can try?

You can save your progress at any time, and you can die and restore your position any number of times — but there's a catch. Throughout *Questmaster*, the computer tracks your experience, which is assigned according to the number of objects you've found, the time you've taken to do so, and — this is the bottom line — the number of times you've died and saved your progress. In other words, you'll do better if you don't save the game than if you do.

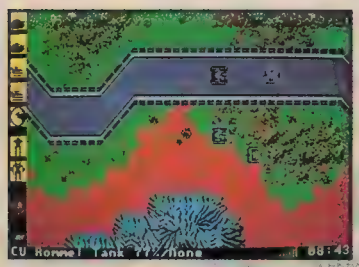
In theory, this is a very strong system, designed to minimize the amount of silly experimenting that seems endemic to text adventures. In practice, though, you should save at several junctures; then, when you know what to do, start over and take the game as far as you can without saving at all.

Text adventures are an acquired taste; once you've played a few, however, you always enjoy the next one. This first *Questmaster* is extremely playable, colorful, and sometimes even funny. Yes, you'll get frustrated, but that, too, is part of the genre. These games are puzzles as much as they're adventures, which accounts for much of their popularity.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; supports sound boards.

STRIKE BACK



27 scenarios of 31st-century political and military strife, set on five planets. The story line changes with the outcome of every decision you make, every battle won . . . or lost.

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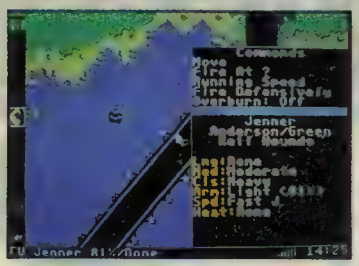
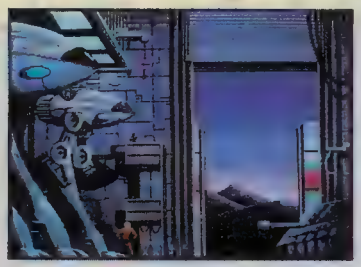


Unique real-time combat system. Hear constant reports from your forces, the Crescent Hawks. Watch your maneuvers unfold before you.



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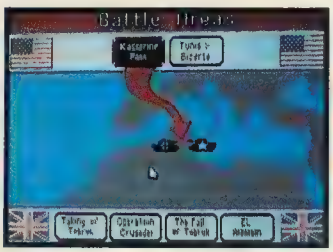
SANDS OF FIRE

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

Nervously, you scan the arid landscape. It's as hot as it is flat. You hope your troop of Shermans is ready — you've got them in an echelon-right formation with the proper mix of ammo types, and you're on course to intercept that Jerry formation that HQ thinks is heading this way.

The turret swerves another ten degrees ... but you spot dust clouds on the horizon. It's Jerry all right! Button up the turret! Load armor-piercing rounds! Range, 3,000 yards and closing fast. Track that PzKpfw IV off the starboard bow. Fire! A clean hit — he's a goner. Uh-oh: our No. 3 vehicle just bought it — better change formation.

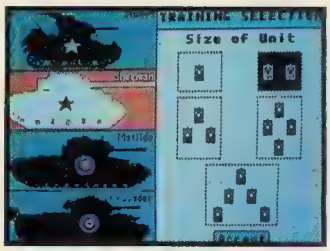


Select individual battles, or go for the campaign option and battle Rommel from start to finish.

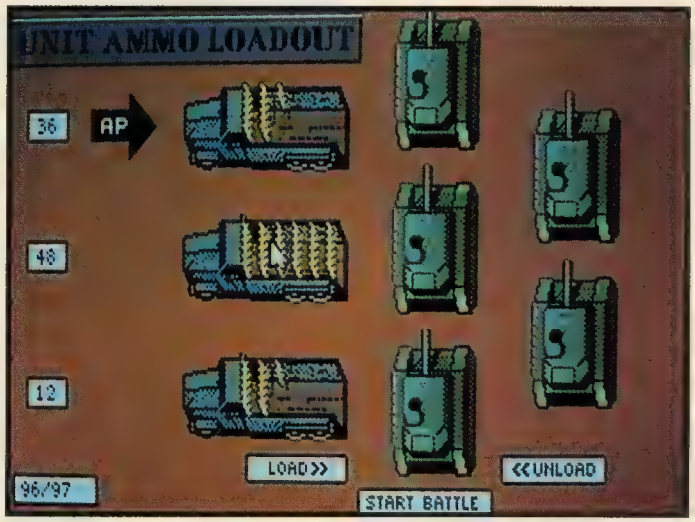
This is the type of experience that awaits you in **Three-Sixty Software's** *Sands of Fire*, an intense recreation of the epic battles in the North African campaign of World War II. You get to refight all the classic battles: Tobruk, El Alamein, Kasserine Pass, Operation Crusader, and so on. You can command the massively armored, absurdly undergunned Crusader, the game and nimble M3-Stuart, Shermans, or Matildas.

Fight individual battles, or, if you prefer, wage an entire campaign, fighting the engagements more or less as they actually happened. Some players may be disappointed in the campaign mode, however, because its parameters are pretty tight — in the sense that the outcome of early battles seems to have no bearing on subsequent ones.

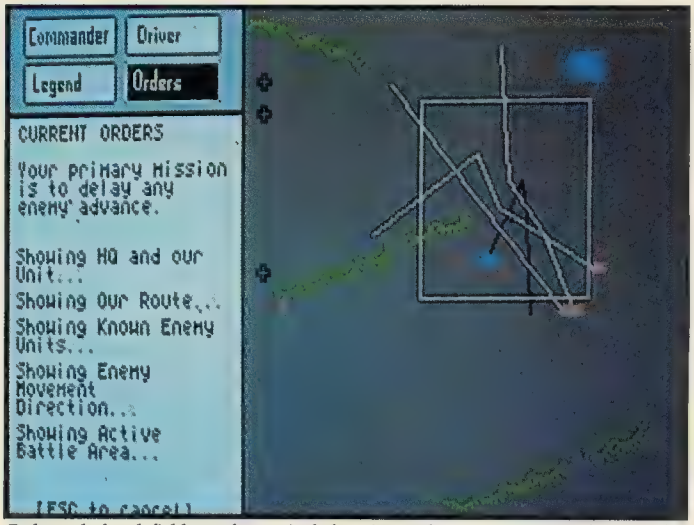
No matter how one-sided or decisive the early battles' results might be, the campaign program proceeds in straight-ahead fashion. Since many of the major tank battles in the North African campaign (Alamein in particular) were won by a strategy of attrition,



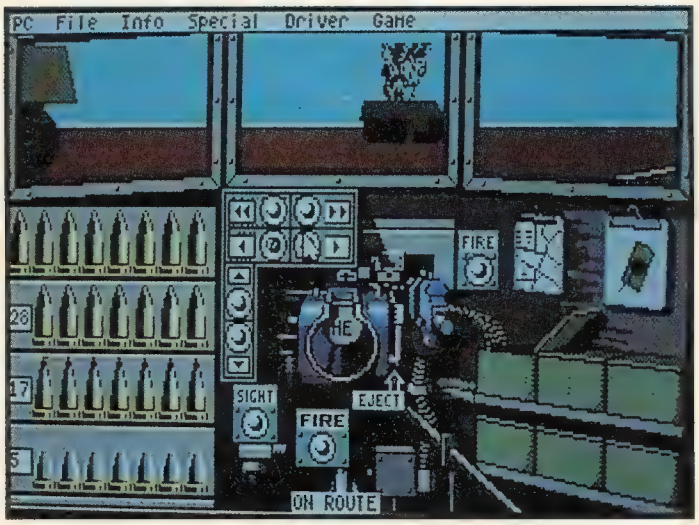
Use this screen to select your tank. The interior of the turrets is the same for all of them, but their external appearance is distinctive.



The ammo load-out is critical — you don't want a high explosive round in the breech if you anticipate running into tanks rather than jeeps or trucks. But the screens are confusing and poorly explained in the manual.



Refer to the battlefield map for tactical planning and maneuvering. Unfortunately, it's very hard to correlate what you see here to your view from the turret.



Battle action is this game's strong suit. It's fast, furious, and graphically intriguing.

this program doctrine makes the larger strategic element of *Sands of Fire* rather thin.

Before each engagement, you get to view a map of the battlefield which shows the terrain, your tanks' route, and the presumed route of the enemy's advance. Although the maps clearly show what appear to be gullies and escarpments, the battlefield is always totally flat. This seems rather an unnecessary concession to programming convenience.

Tank commanders almost always took tactical advantage of every fold and wrinkle in the landscape. But since there aren't any in *Sands*, one of the most common tank tactics — putting your vehicles in a "hull down" position, motionless but ready to move in order to bushwhack a moving enemy formation from a posture of relative safety — is simply impossible.

Once you get past the intense action scenes, in fact, *Sands of Fire* becomes a diminished simulation. The manual is mediocre, written in a style that assumes more computer expertise than many game players have or want to acquire. You'll look in vain, for instance, for a section that tells you, in clear, step-by-step language, how to steer and navigate your tank, or how to relate what you see from the turret to what you see on the map.

Selecting the proper formation is critical to success.

Despite the inclusion of a training scenario, there should be a walk-through tutorial. The ammo load-out sequence, for example, is confusing to look at on the screen and is poorly explained in print.

Likewise, the manual tells you that it's a good tactic to keep your thicker frontal armor toward the enemy, but since the map shows only generic tank symbols instead of your actual formation, and since you can't poke your head out of the turret to get a comprehensive view of the battle, putting this kind of advice into practice will be, for most players, a matter of dumb luck.

Still, many players will gladly forgive *Sands of Fire* its little quirks and foibles because the battle scenes are so darned exciting. The loading/firing sequence is especially gratifying — particularly if you're using a mouse.

The mouse, in effect, becomes your own hand, reaching into the ready-ammo rack for either an armor-piercing or H.E. round, then slamming it into the open breach. Click on the fire button and you'll be rewarded with highly realistic shell-burst effects, whether your shot hits a tank or not. (For a ghoulish diversion, try firing an armor-piercing round into one of the German infantrymen and see what happens.)

Click on the "eject" lever and the breechblock crashes open, a cloud of smoke belches forth, and the spent brass shell casing flies out and crashes to the turret floor with an impressive "clang." This latter special effect, according to a Three-Sixty spokesman, was generated by digitizing a recording of an actual 105 -mm. shell casing being dropped onto concrete.

The graphics are quite handsome, although *Sands of Fire* was originally a Macintosh game. On the PC the game is colorful, but Macintoshy. Don't buy the game expecting standard VGA or EGA graphics, or you'll be disappointed.

So for potential buyers, *Sands of Fire* becomes a matter of personal taste. If you want a hot, fast, tank-versus-tank combat simulation and you don't need top graphics, then *Sands of Fire* is definitely a contender.

GP

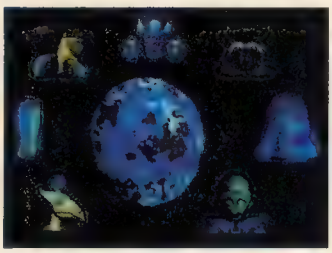
Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse recommended.

STAR CONTROL

DAVE ALBERT

Computer game design is a delicate art, something Paul Reiche does well. With the development team of Free Fall Associates, he gave us *Archon*—an elegant blend of strategy and action that paid homage to his board-gaming roots. And with **Accolade's** interstellar strategy game *Star Control*, he returns to that model.

The *Star Control* universe is portrayed as a three-dimensional, rotating cluster of stars and planets, populated by two power factions — the Alliance of Free Stars (with recently recruited Earth), and the invading Ur-Quan Hierarchy. The seven members of each faction have unique spacecrafts, which are effective against some enemy vessels but helpless against others. Much of your time will be spent deciding the best matchups.



The seven races of the Alliance gloat after smashing Hierarchy forces in one of Star Control*'s nine scenarios.*

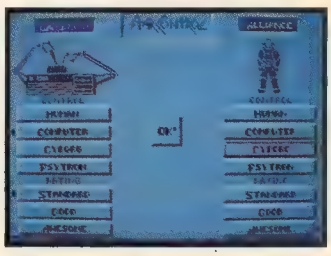
Game play is divided into two equally important components — action and strategy. The action portion of play is the combat section, which is reminiscent of the arcade game *Asteroids*. Here, you control the rotation of your ship with two keys (or a joystick), and the ship's thrust with another key. Two other keys control weapon firing.

Ship motion is inertial (once moving, the ship continues to move unless it meets an obstacle). All action takes place within a single screen full of stars, planets, and asteroids, which interfere with navigation quite effectively. Three levels of magnification are invoked automatically as opponents close or separate.

Each vessel has a crew complement that is slowly depleted by successful enemy hits. When the crew is wiped out, the ship is destroyed. Mismatches are rare; tough battles, common. The animation is quite good in the action portion of the game, and the graphics are smooth and crisp. All relevant data is shown in a column on the right side of the screen, with information boxes displaying small, humorous renderings of the combatants.

In the strategy component of *Star Control*, you must establish colonies to replenish ship crews and mines in order to pay for the construction of new fighters. The game includes nine scenarios that should please strategists. Still, while each scenario requires different victory conditions, the general rule throughout is to destroy all of the enemies.

Star bases are the only means of producing new forces, and, as such, need to be closely guarded in the later stages of a session. Fortifications to any of your installations force your opponents to squander moves in a siege, so these kinds of moves can be most useful in tying up enemy resources.



A human player representing the Alliance takes on the computer-controlled forces of the Hierarchy. Note the Cyborg choice, allowing the computer to handle combat for the human player.

Also included is a scenario editor that lets you make a variety of choices: the fleets for both sides; the victory conditions for you and for your opponents; the number of ships which may be purchased during play; the star cluster in which action takes place; and the initial deployment of ships. You can also include random generation of special relics.

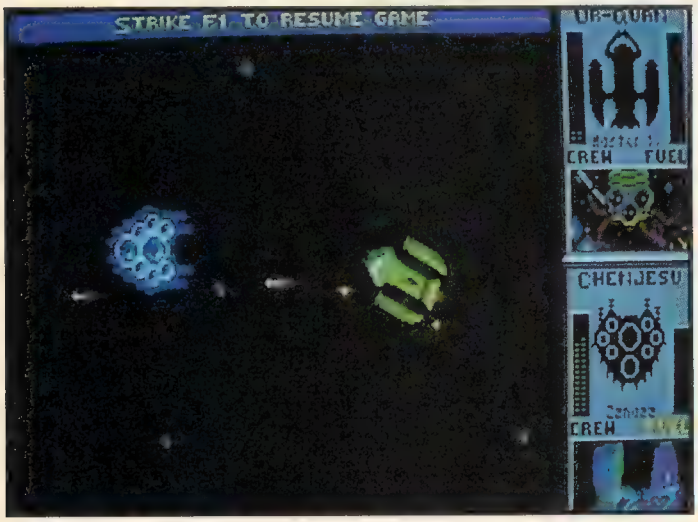
The rotating star field that comprises *Star Control*'s game arena contains three types of planets — Mineral Worlds, on

Spacecraft from either side can be studied in practice mode. This Hierarchy ship is flown by an arachnoid race of great ferocity.

which mines may be established; Life Worlds, where colonies may be started; and Dead Worlds. You are given three turns in each move to deploy forces. Establishing a mine, colony, or fortification eats up two of these turns. Moving a ship from one planet to another, or building a new ship (if your mines have produced enough revenue), uses your last turn.

To move, select a ship and view the "space spines" (lines to other planets) that appear on-screen. Choose one available path to follow and your move is executed.

A human Alliance player takes on the computer-controlled Hierarchy in the Art of War scenario. The computer makes strategic decisions for the human, leaving the player free to concentrate on combat.



A fearsome Ur-Quan Dreadnought is locked in mortal combat with a Chenjesu Broodhome. The Chenjesu can release fuel-stealing drones to harass the enemy while lobbing crystalline mines at it. The Ur-Quan prefer to blow things up quickly.

It's here that the game's interface becomes frustrating. Once a ship is selected, there's no way to back out of your choice and make a different one. Instead, you're forced to use one of your precious three moves — much like the moment when a chess player touches a piece and is required to move it.

This aggravation is compounded by the difficulty involved in "reading" the rotating star field. It's quite easy to make pointless moves because of the translation from 3-D to 2-D on the computer screen. Watching the rotation closely provides some visual clues, but be prepared to waste moves against a computer opponent that never makes a false (or at least unintended) step.

The arachnoid Ilwrath — perhaps the most evil race in the Hierarchy — issue a Hellfire Blast from their Avenger ship to toast a hapless Chenjesu Broodhome.

One of the nicest features of *Star Control* is its varied player options. You can elect to have the computer fight the battles (at three different levels of proficiency), handle strategy, or do both for either side. Thus, if arcade action isn't your thing, you can still enjoy a solid strategy game without being penalized for motor-skill ineptitude.

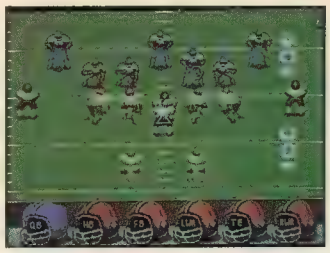
The computer strategy opponent is worthwhile, although a bit direct and aggressive. So if you'd prefer to concentrate on the arcade sequences, Melee Mode dispenses with the strategy game altogether and puts you in a one-to-one dogfight with the spacecraft of your choice.

Star Control is an elegant game that offers a great deal to almost any player — whether you enjoy action, strategy, or both. The graphics are colorful and beautifully rendered, while the action is fast and furious. The strategy in this game, while fairly simple, contains enough elements to keep most players agonizing over resource and movement decisions for hours at a stretch. All in all, *Star Control* is a lovely effort worth a place in most entertainment software collections.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA, MCGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics); VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; supports sound boards.

ABC Monday Night Football



Until the advent of true digital interactive video, this is about as close as PC players will get to the real thing. Graphics, sound, and playability are outstanding — and you get to guide the destinies of all 28 NFL teams.

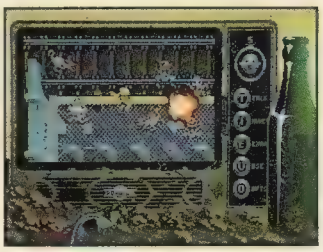
Play is simple, and options are many: You can choose from more than 30 offensive plays and more than a dozen defensive formations. If *that's* not enough, create your own offensive or defensive play with the game's Playmaker Utility.

If you like pro football, it's all here — passing, running, kicking, penalties, injuries, cheerleaders on the sidelines, plus the familiar commentary of Frank, Al, and Dan. *ABC Monday Night Football* may be the best PC football game to date.

Data East

Bad Blood

Centuries after a terrible nuclear war, tensions rose between two factions that survived the holocaust — normal humans (the "Humes"), and their mutant children (the "Mutes"). Over time, it became common to abandon mutant children on the plains, and eventually these mutants formed their own communities.

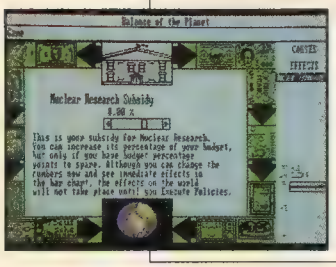


Now there are rumors of all-out war. In *Bad Blood*, you play one of three Mute characters. Your task is to learn about the humans' plans to wipe out the Mutes and to stop the war any way you can.

The game's greatest strength lies in its convincing creation of a post-apocalyptic world — landscapes are littered with such debris as Coke machines, hubcaps, and old furniture.

Origin

Balance of the Planet



One of the most interesting and important games of 1990, *Balance of the Planet* is a unique blend of entertainment and education. Veteran designer Chris Crawford has compiled a tremendous amount of information about the Earth's environment, then arranged and explained it in an easily understandable form.

Balance of the Planet isn't a straight tutorial — it's a sprawling game. As U.N. High Commissioner of the Environment, you set global policies well into the 21st century. You're presented with a multitude of information (covering a huge range of topics) on which to base your policies.

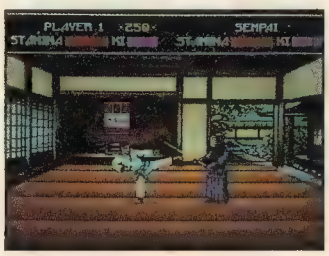
What the player ultimately gets from the game is a realization of how subtly interrelated are all the questions relating to the planet's environment.

Chris Crawford Games

Budokan

If there's such a thing as a gentle martial arts game, *Budokan* is it. While other games of the same genre may feature battles or gratuitous violence, this game maintains the approach to martial arts that has been taught in Japan for hundreds of years.

Budokan manages to evoke a rare contemplative spirit — although you can play it as an excellent action game with enough variety to satisfy anyone. The game interface is very smooth, but if you don't have a fairly fast machine, you'll wish you did. You'll also wish for a VGA card to enjoy the excellent graphics.



Budokan is a special game that may give you insight into a philosophy born in an era that many Japanese regard as the golden age of their civilization.

Electronic Arts

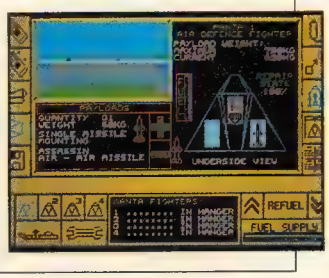
Carrier Command

This futuristic game, a big hit in Europe several years ago, has made it to the States — and it deserves strong consideration by fans of both strategic war games and combat simulations.

Carrier Command's premise is simple: You have territory, the enemy has territory, and there's lots of real estate for the taking. In this case, the real estate is a distant planet covered with islands.

Conquering an island is just the beginning — once you capture it, there are more decisions. Do you turn it into a manufacturing facility? A source for raw materials? A defensive bastion? While you're deciding, don't forget to develop a battle strategy for the next island. *Carrier Command* is challenging and fun, without being frustrating or shallow ... a game you can enjoy for a long time.

MicroPlay



Centurion

With its epic flavor, excellent graphics, and simple game interface, *Centurion* brings ancient Rome very clearly to life.

Its battlefield graphics and mechanics are nothing less than inspired. Everything is here — politics, games, and military systems. Despite its incredible breadth, the game is very easy to play.

You begin in the year 275 B.C. and continue until either Rome is conquered or you become Caesar. It's a long road — you start as a lowly officer and must work your way up through nine ranks if you hope to become Caesar.

In the process, though, you must help the empire as well. Your success depends on your efforts in the battlefield, your diplomacy, your efficiency as administrator, and, most vitally, the way the populace perceives your actions. All in all, this is a sure winner.

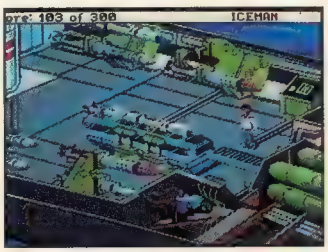
Electronic Arts

Code Name: Iceman

The Communist threat might be over, but that's no excuse to ignore this high-quality adventure. *Code Name: Iceman*, written by Jim Walls, author of the popular *Police Quest* series, may be Sierra's most complex game — it's certainly one of the toughest.

As a secret agent, your mission is to rescue a kidnapped United States ambassador. You're called away from your island vacation to head a rescue team sent to the Middle East.

Sandwiched between two typically Sierra interactive sections of the game is an intricate submarine simulation. You'll deal with sub maintenance, complex navigation and maneuvers, sonar readings, and an attacking Soviet sub. The game is broad — there is a scuba-diving sequence, a race with a helicopter, dice games, and even a tropical romance. *Code Name: Iceman* is an worthy challenge to any adventure gamer.

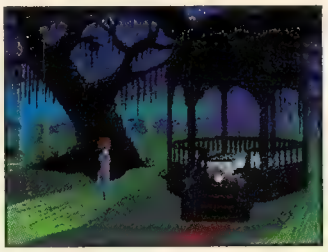


Sierra

The Colonel's Bequest

In the midst of the Roaring Twenties, Laura Bow, a college journalist, is invited by her roommate, Lillian, to spend the weekend at Lillian's family plantation, buried in the swamps of Louisiana.

There in the dilapidated mansion, an odd assortment of relatives has gathered to hear an announcement by Lillian's uncle, Colonel Dijon. He's decided to divide his fortune among the relatives — or to the last survivor among them. The words are scarcely out of his mouth when the bodies start turning up. Someone's not willing to wait for the money.

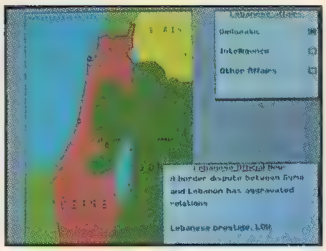


Although the ingredients of a great mystery are here, the game is long on mood and short on substance. Since you're confined to the mansion and its grounds, you end up simply searching every room over and over again.

Sierra

Conflict

This game does a good job of simulating the ambiguity and intricate intertwinings of Middle Eastern diplomacy.

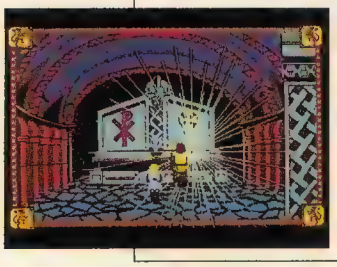


It's December 1996, and you've just been sworn in as Israel's prime minister—your predecessor's been assassinated, and all hell's about to break loose in ten different locations. Your job is to protect and preserve your nation, even if it means engineering the collapse of every other regime around you. You're constantly pressed to make critical decisions in diplomacy, intelligence, and national defense.

Conflict isn't fancy — no animation, elementary (but crisp) graphics, and few bells and whistles. Still, it covers all the bases and plays quite smoothly. For a game that's inexpensive and can be learned and played quickly, *Conflict* is a darn good one.

Virgin Mastertronic

Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail



Rich in atmosphere and detail, *Conquests of Camelot* is a graphically stunning game. Designed by Christy Marx, author of the "Jem" cartoon series and "Sisterhood of Steel" comic books, the adventure is a result of extensive research by Marx and her husband, professional illustrator Peter Ledger, into Arthurian myth and legend.

Even if you grew up reading *Le Morte d'Arthur* and *Idylls of the King*, you'll learn something new from this game. As Arthur, you interact with Merlin, Gawaine, the Black Knight, Launcelot, Gwenhyver, and other familiar characters while traversing the expanses of your kingdom.

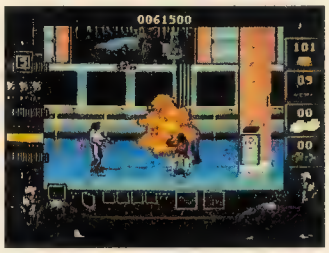
You'll even trek to Jerusalem for your ultimate quest—finding the Holy Grail. Beginning adventurers will find the game a challenge, while experts might not think it's too difficult — but either way, Sierra fans won't be disappointed.

Sierra

Crime Wave

A landmark in the computer arcade genre, *Crime Wave* is gorgeous to look at and great to play. Arcade sequences are linked by impressive digitized images—some with animation. And Access' software-driven RealSound gives you a lot more from your PC speaker.

One warning, though: *Crime Wave* is billed as an adult



game—and rightly so. It's the most graphically violent game we've seen, and it's sexually suggestive—offensively so for some tastes.

The scenario puts you in pursuit of the kidnapped daughter of the president. But the mastermind behind the operation knows you're on the trail—and every lowlife in his employ is after you. The action is fast and furious in this bold and unique game format.

Access

Day of the Viper

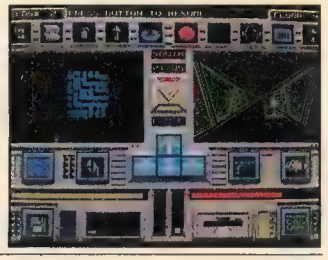
If you like your science fiction and adventure with a touch of arcade action, check out *Day of the Viper*.

The game's 28th-century scenario features a renegade android prototype, called GAR (Genetic Android Race), who has been on a murderous rampage against all life forms for three centuries. It's your job to stop him—but the odds are stacked against you.

GAR's intergalactic army of robots has overrun your main defense base, the site of advanced weapons research. They've destroyed the central computer program, but they don't know that the program was saved onto 25 floppy disks that are now hidden throughout the complex.

You may be frustrated when first playing this futuristic thriller, but stay with it — this game grows on you.

Accolade



Dragonstrike

A flight simulator, yes—but instead of flying an F-18 jet, you fly a mythical dragon.

The realm of Ansalon has been all but overrun by the evil dragon armies, and your goal is to keep the skies clear. To fulfill your quest, you must successfully complete 22 separate missions against white dragons, wyverns, acid-slinging black dragons, and finally the terrifying and powerful red dragons. Defeat them to receive a new rank, as well as more-powerful dragons to ride.

DragonStrike combines high-quality animation with a first-person perspective to give players a rare glimpse of what this kind of flight might really be like.

SSI

Dragon Wars

If you're a veteran of fantasy role-playing adventures, you've no doubt played the popular *Bard's Tale* games. In *Dragon Wars*, the *Bard's Tale* designers (now with Interplay Productions) have delivered a concept similar to the *Bard* series—but much better.

Dragon Wars takes *Bard* into new realms of playability and sophistication. There's a lot to do and a lot to explore in *Dragon Wars*, as you try to rescue your land from the clutches of Namtar. The game's rich experience is enhanced by a wonderful, easy-to-use interface.

Your game strategy should be as much about managing your resources as it is about fighting bad guys. You can easily spend several months engrossed in the world of *Dragon Wars*.

Interplay

Earthrise

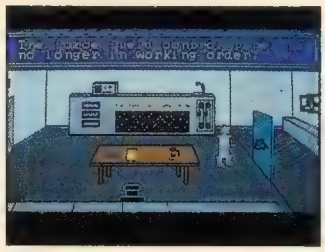
An enjoyable futuristic adventure game, *Earthrise* invites comparisons to many of Sierra's popular titles because the game interface, text entry, and humor are quite similar.

The plot puts you, as Terran Mining Guild's ace troubleshooter, in charge of preventing a disaster and solving a mystery. Solus, a rich mining asteroid, has gone silent. All attempts to contact the crew have failed.

To complicate matters, Solus is on a collision course with Earth. Your job: to prevent a collision while saving Solus and any crew members you can find. So you hop the first ship you can and travel to the asteroid to start sleuthing.

You must tackle lots of clever puzzles—and uncover the many red herrings as well — on your way to finishing this game. *Earthrise* is a solid adventure.

Interstel



Escape From Hell

Have you ever had one of those days where things started badly, then went downhill from there? Well, this time there may be no end to the day.

For reasons known only to him, Satan has spirited you, your girlfriend Alison, and your buddy Alan into the underworld. Separated, you must find your friends and escape from the abyss. Joined by a carefully selected group of friendly "virtuous pagans," you must battle your way through Satan's minions and whatever other historic bad guys stand in your way.

If you took a few pages from *Paradise Lost*, seasoned them with a dash of Monty Python, then garnished them with *The Terminator*, you'd end up with the flavor of *Escape from Hell*. If you're looking for a few laughs and absorbing game play, you won't be disappointed.

Electronic Arts

Faces

If you've heard that *Faces* is similar to *Tetris* and *Welltris*, you're not wrong — but you're not right, either. Soviet designer Alexey Pajitnov has added a new element to *Faces* that rejuvenates his formula and makes *Faces* a delightful, addictive game.

As in *Tetris* and *Welltris*, you steer falling pieces to form columns in a pit. But while the other two games use abstract

shapes, the blocks in *Faces* are chins, lips, noses, eyes, and foreheads. You have to assemble them into recognizable portraits such as those of Gorbachev, Einstein, Mozart, Shakespeare, Sitting Bull, Dracula, Lenin— and dozens more.

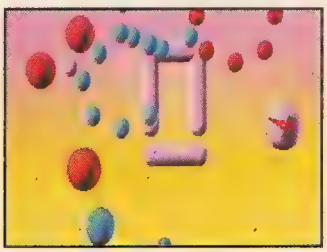
You won't rack up high scores, but it's pretty amusing to mix and match faces — Margaret Thatcher's hair atop Gorbachev's eyes, Mao's nose, Gandhi's smile, and Lenin's goatee is worth a giggle.

Spectrum HoloByte

Harmony

Had enough death and destruction? Where other games reward you for violent actions, the goal in *Harmony* is to restore the universe to its natural balance.

You're a ball floating gently in ether, gently pushing other balls of like color into harmonious union. In the Mantra mode, there's no time limit or pressure to accomplish tasks, while in normal play, you must bring them together before they explode from internal pressure.



It's in normal play that you'll work hard to achieve the goal of harmony — and as the levels progress, you'll find it extremely tough going.

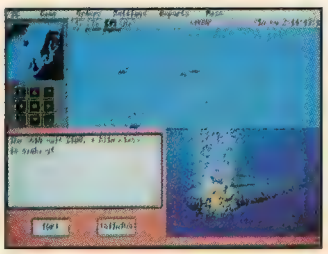
Whether or not *Harmony* brings true unanimity into your life, it's a beautiful game — and the quiet contemplation of beauty can be a soothing pursuit in itself.

Accolade

Harpoon

With an extremely well-designed system of menus and dialogue boxes, *Harpoon* is as playable as any naval strategy game you're likely to see.

Far from a "bash-the-Russkies" game, it allows you to control the fleet of either NATO or Warsaw Pact forces (with other combatants available in additional scenario disks). You have a choice of 12 different scenarios of increasing difficulty, and 5 reality options like "Normal Maintenance Failures" and "Possible Nuclear Release."



You can even edit the formation of the fleet as you see fit, adapting to unique situations. The manual comes with detailed strategic notes, and an accompanying booklet gives you tactical do's and don't's.

As a simulation, *Harpoon* is absorbing. If you want to know what modern naval military systems are all about, here's your starting point.

Three-Sixty

Heat Wave

Here's something a bit different from the usual fare of racing games and simulations — speedboat racing. In *Heat Wave*, you choose any of six courses (San Francisco Bay, Mississippi River, and four in the Miami area). You can preview course layouts before starting, then select one of four boats.

Next, register as a rookie or experienced driver. (Warning: start as a rookie!) You also have a choice of first-person perspective (watch your gauges at all times), a helicopter view, or a mile-high view. During competition, you need to use all three perspectives.

Although *Heat Wave* doesn't really deliver the feeling of sheer high-speed racing the way some arcade racing games do, it's a solid treatment with a realistic feel.

Accolade

Hoyle Book of Games, Volume 2

Unlike *Volume 1, Hoyle Book of Games, Volume 2* doesn't offer a cast of characters to select as opponents, but there's a good reason — it contains 28 different solitaire card games.

Although the package contains some of the most common solitaire games, such as Klondike, Canfield, Golf, Pyramid, and Yukon, you'll have more fun if you branch into the more unusual versions — Scorpion, Gaps, Aces Up, Eight Off, and a load of others.

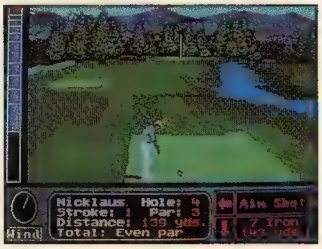
You'll pick up the solitaire lingo quickly and will have no difficulty distinguishing between foundation, stock, and other common terms. If you do get confused, the rules for each game can be pulled down from the menu at any time. There are also hard and easy versions of every game so you can customize your play.

Sierra

Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf and Course Design

Unlimited Golf takes solid graphics and game play and expands them by adding a feature to design your own dream golf courses.

Jack Nicklaus has devised some of the most challenging courses in North America, and *Unlimited Golf* gives you two complete Nicklaus-designed courses on which to master your best game. But this program's best feature is the elaborate course-design module.



You can edit existing courses or design one from scratch, which makes it especially attractive for players who don't want to shell out for course disks. Offering a never-ending selection of golfing pleasure, this is a nice package.

Electronic Arts

Knights of Legend

This outstanding game deserves the attention of every fantasy role-playing gamer. While it uses the classic RPG formula of most games in the genre, *Knights of Legend* plays on the sword-and-sorcery themes with such virtuosity that veteran players will find it satisfying, and newcomers will find it compelling.

Part of the game's power is due to its designer, Todd Mitchell Porter, who spent eight years perfecting it. He's created a huge, challenging adventure — even veterans should plan on investing more than 100 hours — with a player interface that's elegant, intuitive, and easy to use.

The graphics are lush, crisp, and detailed. All things considered, *Knights of Legend* puts most other games in its genre to shame.

Origin

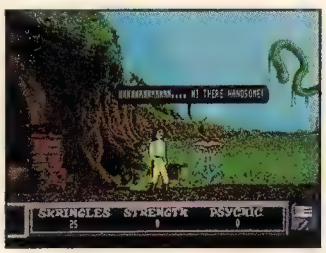
The Kristal

Combine arcade action with role-playing adventure, add a liberal dose of humor, and you'll have an idea of what *The Kristal* is all about.

At game's start, you, as the somewhat dashing Dancis Frake, find yourself on a backwater planet, awaking from what you think was a weird dream. But you don't know where you are or what you're doing there — you only know that you feel compelled to search through this low-rent part of the galaxy for a Kristal that may not exist. Your memory is suspect, and you soon find that certain strangers aren't strangers at all — they remember you well from past dealings.

Save often in this game — it's tough, but rewarding. *The Kristal* was one of the most popular games in Europe during 1989, and it's easy to see why.

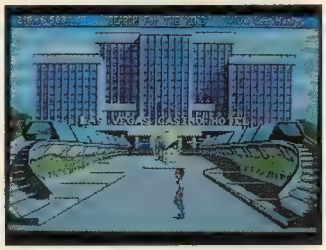
Cinemaware



Les Manley in: Search for The King

Lester P. Manley is about to go through a change of life. But as he sits in his minuscule office deep in the bowels of the WILL-TV building, he doesn't know it yet.

From his humble beginnings as a videotape rewinder, you must take the intrepid hero all the way to the spotlight on stage at The Kingdom theme park — and beyond. His quest is to win a million-dollar contest by tracking down The King and presenting proof of his existence. Once he's collected



the big bucks, he hopes to win the hand of the girl of his dreams, secretary Stella Hart.

This is a great problem-solving, mind-twisting, slightly raunchy game that will have you beating your head against the wall — and enjoying every minute of it.

Accolade

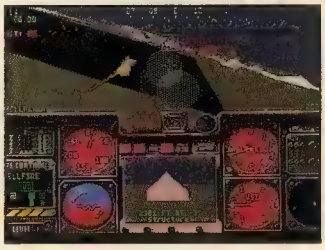
LHX Attack Chopper

The LHX (Light Helicopter, Experimental) is still so secret that no model of it has ever been seen in public. Electronic Arts apparently found a loophole in Pentagon security and was able to get the goods on this advanced, high-tech chopper. The result is a very plausible flight simulation.

Flying the LHX takes a lot of practice, but everything you need is in the massive, heavily illustrated manual. After training flights, you can elect a combat assignment in Libya, Vietnam, or East Germany.

There are five difficulty levels, the easiest of which is dangerous enough for most players. The menu of missions ranges from stealth to heavy shooting.

For such a complex simulator, *LHX* offers a nearly ideal blend of challenge and



reward — it's truly outstanding.

Electronic Arts

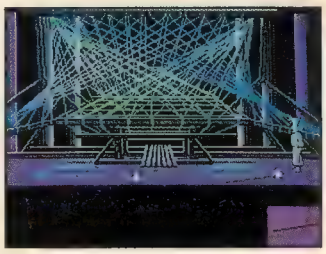
Loom

This game is a delight. The graphics are absolutely spellbinding, with a richness practically unmatched by any other game.

You are Bobbin Threadbare, an outcast of the Guild of Weavers, whose looms use light and magic to form patterns in the very substance of reality. On your 17th birthday, the Elders meet to decide your destiny, which they know is tied somehow to the coming apocalypse. Without your intervention, the pattern of the loom will disintegrate.

Loom is a linear game — you won't be able to progress without completing certain tasks. It's not a difficult game, although you can customize your play to three difficult levels. Since large sections of the game are computer controlled, you watch as much as you play — but both watching and playing are rewarding experiences in *Loom*.

Lucasfilm



MegaTraveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy

The first in a projected series of intergalactic science-fiction role-playing games, *MegaTraveller 1* takes its name, game system, and storylines from the board game developed by the Game Designer's Workshop.

The best part of *MegaTraveller 1* is its character creation process. The battle system has problems — a result of the designers squeezing a role-playing game into a real-time action game. You might spend more time tinkering than exploring.

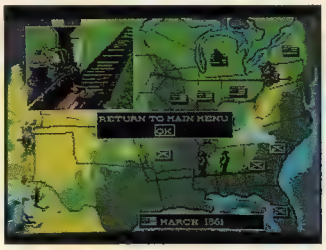
While the debut package has several shortcomings, the series itself shows great promise. If the next installment brings a new battle system, a smoother interface, and a longer, more involved plot, the *MegaTraveller* series could light up the stars.

Paragon

North and South

This odd, ditzy, yet somehow endearing game reduces the entire War Between the States to the level of a Warner Brothers cartoon.

Using a colorful strategic map, you shift armies from one territory to another, allowing animated gun batteries, cavalry, and infantry to shoot at each other in lively engagements that might be termed "tactical arcade." Pure arcade action lets soldiers duke it out with fists and knives. Was the Civil War really like this?



In the course of events, there are also random happenings such as Indian raids, floods, and attacks by Mexican terrorists. But even though little in this goofy game appears in the history books, it's still enjoyable to play.

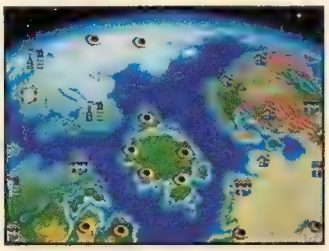
Data East

Nuclear War

This brisk, colorful, irreverent, and easy-to-learn strategy game is loaded with black humor and political satire.

You play a world leader whose nation is surrounded by four other countries. Their leaders are potential nuclear opponents—and a few of them are insane. You can build weapons, attack, launch a propaganda campaign, or erect a defense system, depending on your objectives and your relationship with your neighbors. Victory goes to the last remaining country, even if its population is reduced to living in stone huts.

Nice guys do *not* finish last in *Nuclear War*. The wildly caricatured leaders are familiar — Infidel Castro, Tricky Dick, and Malomar Kaddaffy are just a few. Games are fast and crazy, but manage to make a very real and deadly serious point.



New World Computing

PGA Tour Golf

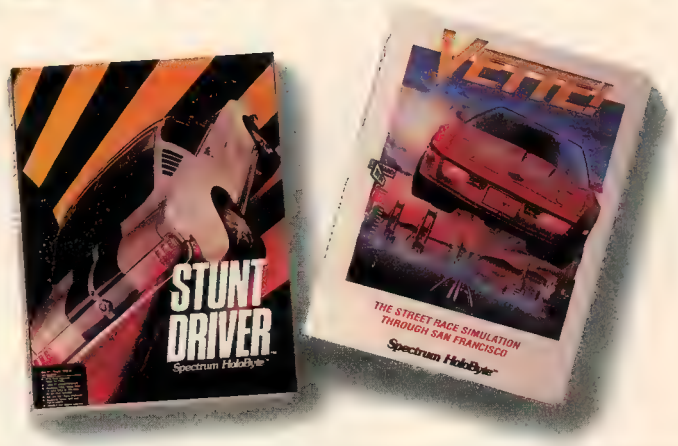
This is golf for those accustomed to watching it on television, so this could easily become the most popular computerized links simulation there is.

Perspectives include an overhead view, the ball's lie on the course, a 3-D view of the green, and a superb overhead pan of the entire hole. Unlike most golf games, this one makes strong use of the TV camera, shifting the view immediately as the ball begins to land. You can even get instant replays of shots.

An information bulletin often appears, describing how a computer-controlled player on another hole has just fared, and giving that player's current position on the leader board — so you always know if you need to play catch-up, or if you're sitting pretty. *PGA Tour Golf* is an excellent game of great detail.

Electronic Arts

DRIVE IT



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SPECIAL BUYER'S GUIDE SECTION

Powerdrome

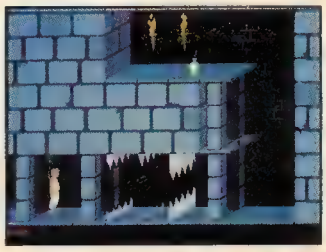
What will racing be like in the 25th century? *Powerdrome* may provide a few clues. This game succeeds in creating the illusion of hurtling acceleration, hair-raising turns, and close brushes with high-speed doom.

Graphically, it's a psychedelic knockout. The futuristic high-stakes racing in *Powerdrome* is carried out by daredevil pilots, who race "turbo-rapide" Typhoons at blinding speeds along three-dimensional courses that float in outer space or in mid-air. As one these pilots, you must compete against four of the meanest, hottest competitors in the galaxy.

The game is a series of races on six very different tracks — and the result is one of the most exhilarating race programs ever developed.

Electronic Arts

Prince of Persia



If you like action, a good storyline, mind-boggling puzzles, and dazzling graphics, you'll love *Prince of Persia.*

While you were a wandering adventurer, you met the sultan's daughter, a lovely princess. Now, the evil Jaffar has usurped the throne of Persia and kidnapped the princess. She has one hour to decide whether or not to marry Jaffar. If she refuses, she dies.

Naturally, you wish to rescue her and win her hand — but as the game begins, you're languishing unarmed in a dank dungeon below the palace. To make every second of the hour count, you must use your best mental abilities and sword skills. Save your game often to avoid those pesky little deaths that can erase all your hard-earned progress.

Prince of Persia is a terrific game in every way, but the graphics and animation alone are worth the price of the package.

Broderbund

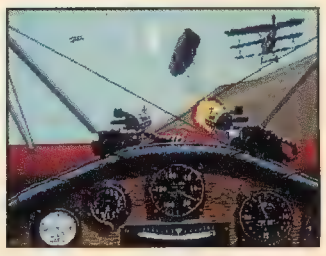
Red Baron

This hot World War I simulator offers detailed modeling of 22 period aircraft, each different, and a stellar array of WWI aces to portray.

You can either fly as a selected ace or fly against one. The program accurately mimics the actual flying style and tactics of that pilot. *Red Baron* also offers remarkable flexibility when customizing the degree of difficulty and realism. You can choose to fly with only those instruments available to pilots of that time, or add a discreet navigational aid or two.

If you love a good dogfight, but hate high-tech gadgetry, hundred-page manuals, and annoying acronyms, *Red Baron* offers just a stick, a rudder, a gun sight, and the wind singing through the struts.

Dynamix



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Revolution '76

When you play this game, you may very well conclude that the success of the American Revolution was something of a miracle.

You're in charge of the 13 colonies at their weakest, most vulnerable moment: the day they broke from England. Each game-turn represents a year, during which you handle all the decision-making in areas of domestic politics, international relations, and the military situation.

There's great behind-the-screen complexity in *Revolution '76*, but the on-screen format is deceptively simple and self-explanatory. You can play an entire game just by looking at the screen and doing what comes naturally.

This game is for history fans, and it seems ideal for classroom use. *Revolution '76* is richly educational — and lots of fun besides.

Britannica

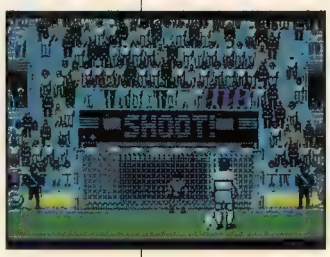
Rick Davis' World Trophy Soccer

A good, but not exceptional game overall, *Rick Davis' World Soccer* is a translation of the popular *World Trophy Soccer* arcade game, and it has many of the same strengths and weaknesses.

With a unique emphasis on distinguishing between middle-field play and play-on-goal, the action shifts from an overhead to a player's-eye view of the shooter and goalkeeper once inside the opposing team's penalty area. A reverse closeup occurs when the opposing team bears down on your net. But this still represents only a partial simulation of a complex sport.

Despite the increasing popularity of soccer, this is still one of the only simulations available for the sport. If you like the arcade version, you'll like this version as well. It's fun, but it's not real soccer.

Melbourne House



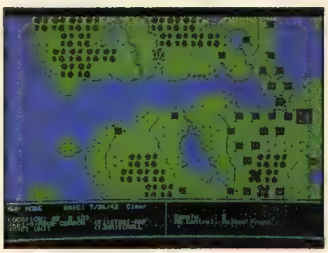
Second Front

Kudos to veteran war game designer Gary Grigsby! He's done something with *Second Front* never done before in any board or computer game: He's created a simulation that conveys both the epic sweep and the ask-no-quarter bloodiness of World War II's Hitler-Stalin confrontation, on both the strategic and tactical levels. And he's put the whole thing into a game system that's very playable.

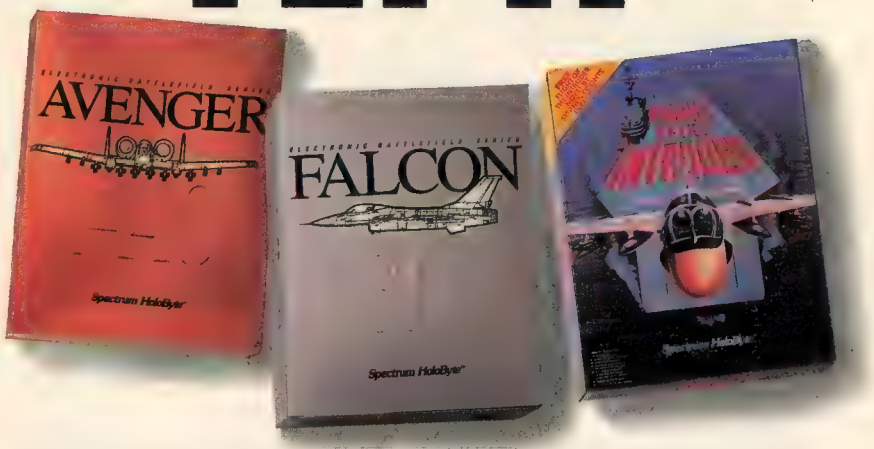
Second Front features two campaign scenarios, the original Operation Barbarossa and the campaign that led to Stalingrad, and two battle scenarios, Moscow and Stalingrad. You can play either the Germans or Soviets, but you're in for a struggle no matter what side you choose.

The graphics are as handsome as the game system is elegant. As a war game, *Second Front* is one of the best ever published.

SSI



FLY IT



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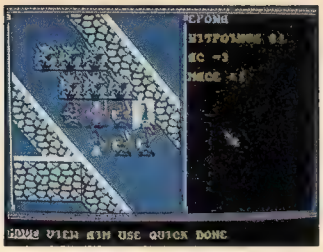
Secret of the Silver Blades



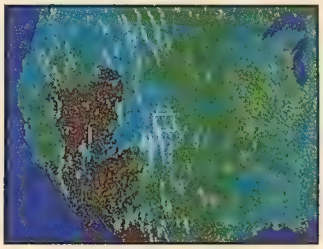
The fourth full-scale role-playing adventure in SSI's Advanced Dungeons and Dragons series, *Secret of the Silver Blades* returns to the land of the Forgotten Realms.

Like other games in the series, *Silver Blades* offers a playable, often addictive series of small quests, all leading to a final battle with a great evil. The game also demonstrates the steady improvement and refinement of the popular series.

True AD&D fans will appreciate *Silver Blades'* strict adherence to the spirit and rules of the original board game. This is true in character creation, attention to difficulty levels, the magic system, the time scale — and especially the tactical combat system, which maintains the detail, color, and atmosphere of fully advanced AD&D.

SSI

Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon



A simulation of rare complexity, *Railroad Tycoon* re-creates the rise of railroading as it became perhaps the most powerful single industry ever.

The game constructs a world so complete and thorough you'll probably have trouble turning off the computer. *Railroad Tycoon* never becomes bogged down by its considerable detail, and it achieves an impressive level of reality without sacrificing playability.

Using a simple and intuitive interface, you control nearly every aspect of the rail business, from surveying land to finding the best route for a new line to competing with other railroads and fostering new industries.

Railroad Tycoon is clearly one of the best simulations of any type — indeed, one of the best games in general — to appear in a long time.

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ANCIENT ART WAR	31
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BATTLE CIVIL WAR I,II,III	28
BATTLES OF NAPOLEON	34
BLUE MAX DEF.	34
CENTURIAN ROME	35
DECISION GETTYSBURG	34
GENGHIS KHAN	40
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GOLDS OF AMERICAS	29
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KNIGHTS OF THE SKY	40
NOBUNAGA'S AMB.	40
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REVOLUTION '76	34
SHILOH	28
WATERLOO	40

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WOLF PACK	37

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SIM CITY TER, EDIT	15
TANK	34

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TV SPORTS BASKETBALL	34

ADVENTURE, SCI/FI, FANTASY

ARMADA 2525	34
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BARDS TALE III	22
BATTLETECH 2	34
BREACH II	34
BUCK ROGERS	34
BUDOKAN	34
CAME FROM DESERT	34
CHAMB. SCI PRIESTESS	34
CHAMPIONS KRYNN	34
CODENAME: ICE MAN	40
COL. BEQUEST	40
CONQUEST CAMELOT	40
DRAGON LORD	34
DRAGON STRIKE	34
DRAGON WARS	34
DRAGONS FLAME	29
EARTHRISE	34
ESCAPE FROM HELL	34
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IMPERIUM	28
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IT CAME FROM THE DESERT	34
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KINGS QUEST I-IV	34
LIGHT SPEED	40
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LOOM	40
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MIDWINTER	34
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PIRATES	28
POOL OF RADIANCE	34
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STARBLADE	34
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STARFLIGHT II	34
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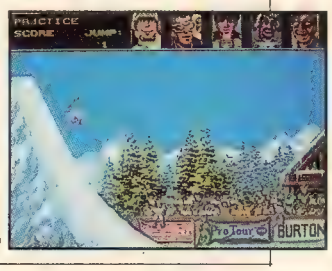
Ski or Die

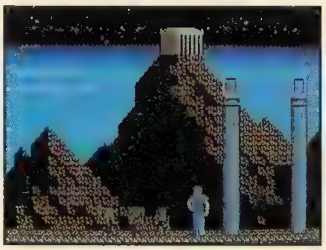
Like its predecessor, *Skate or Die*, this arcade-action game offers a handful of competitive events that translate into a lot of fun and laughs for one to six players.

In some respects, *Ski or Die* is a "formula" game that's similar to other multi-event diversions for PCs and videogame machines. However, it has elements that make it stand out from the crowd — namely, its extremely well-rendered graphics and whimsical sense of humor.

Train with the game's practice sessions before undertaking the five competitive events — the Snowboard Half-Pipe, the Snowball Blast, Acro Aerials, the Innertube Thrash, and the Downhill Blitz. None of the events requires razor-quick reflexes, which makes *Ski or Die* a fun-filled game for all ages.

Electronic Arts





Sorcerian

For fans of Sierra games, *Sorcerian* might come as a bit of a surprise. It doesn't have the traditional Sierra interface or game play. Instead it features a four-character adventuring party that works its way through 15 different quest scenarios.

In this sense, *Sorcerian* is closer to Nintendo's *Zelda* games than to most current fantasy role-playing games for PCs. Why the departure for Sierra? *Sorcerian* is among the best-selling role-playing games in Japan. Sierra checked it out and liked it so much that it brought the game to North America. The choice was a good one.

Sorcerian is addictive and highly playable, and the adventures become more challenging as you go along. You won't lose interest quickly in this unusual, highly enjoyable role-playing game.

Sierra

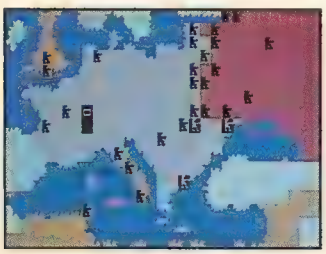
Storm Across Europe

For war gamers interested in the big picture, *Storm Across Europe* covers the European theater of World War II in its entirety, from North Africa to Sweden and from Gibraltar to Russia's Ural mountains.

Designed for one to three players — you can choose to portray British, German, or Soviet forces — this game can be played in a single evening since each game-turn represents three months of action.

Players may choose from multiple scenarios and may change starting levels for each country to explore "what-if" possibilities. You then control every facet of the war, including the movement of armies, amphibious landings, U-boat campaigns, bombing strikes, naval attacks against enemy shipping, and the juggling of resources between production and research.

SSI



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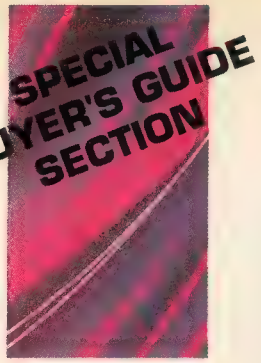


Ultima VI: The False Prophet

This latest in the highly popular *Ultima* series is the first to break free from dependence on the Apple II for its design and programming. The result is a game that fits PCs to a T and will please fans of the series as well. *Ultima VI* is also almost completely playable with a mouse, using an interface more easily learned than those of the first five *Ultimas*.

When you begin, you're taken through a series of beautifully drawn VGA screens which lead you from the present into the mystic world of Britannia. Be prepared to spend hours scouting around because, as in all the earlier adventures, Britannia is big, its inhabitants are varied, and the number of tasks to accomplish is enormous.

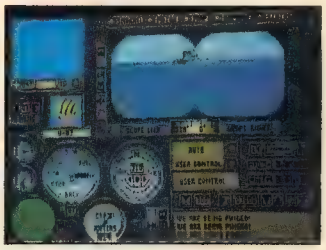
The latest in a respected line, *Ultima VI* is quite easy to play and even better to watch.

Origin

WolfPack

This is the first mass-market game to simulate the submarines-versus-convoy action in World War II's Battle of the Atlantic. It maintains remarkable fidelity to its subject and features first-rate role-playing, whether you play a wolfpack commander or a surface (convoy) commander.

You can select any of a dozen scenarios, which cover almost every type of action characteristic of the North Atlantic campaign. You can also use the construction program to generate dozens of new missions. Game play is constantly engaging, and action is intense. *WolfPack* is a special treat if you have VGA graphics and a sound board. Playing the game with a friend offers additional challenges, too. This game merits an Iron Cross for its first-class realism and intensity.



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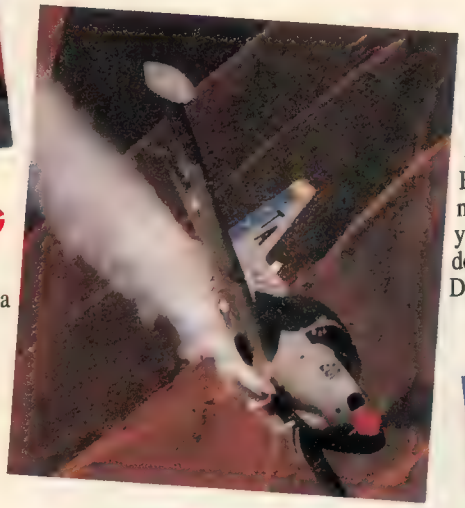

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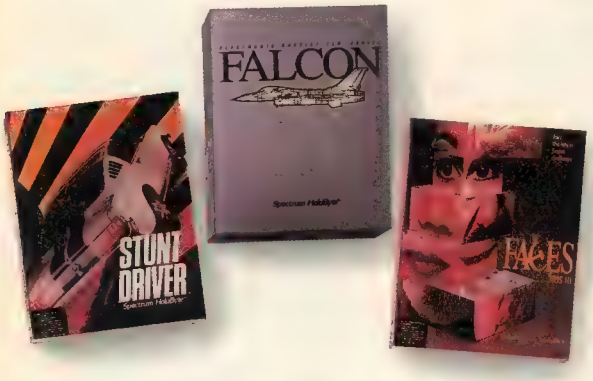

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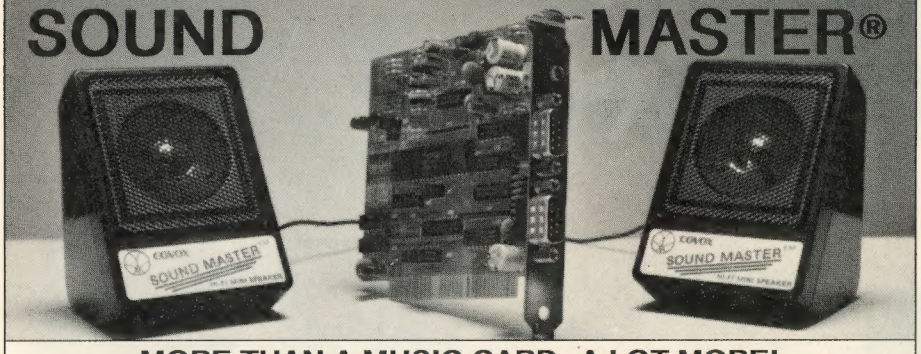

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company	page number
Access	27, 29
Accolade	6-9
Activision	21, 39, 77
Ad Lib	IFC
Capstone	75
CompuServe	33
Covox	96
Data East	IBC
Electronic Arts	15, 41, 53,67
Electronic Zoo	57
GameTek	45, 71
Interplay	19
Lucasfilm	31, 43
Marketplace	90
MicroProse	25, 51
Microtyme	94
Origin	22-23, 34
Ready Soft	1
Spectrum Holo-Byte	5, 37, 89, 91, 93, 95
Spinnaker	49
Strategic Simulation, Inc.	47, 69
Three-SixtyPacific	59
Titus	55
Viking Software	92
Virgin Mastertronic	73
Game Player's PC Strategy Guide subscription	17

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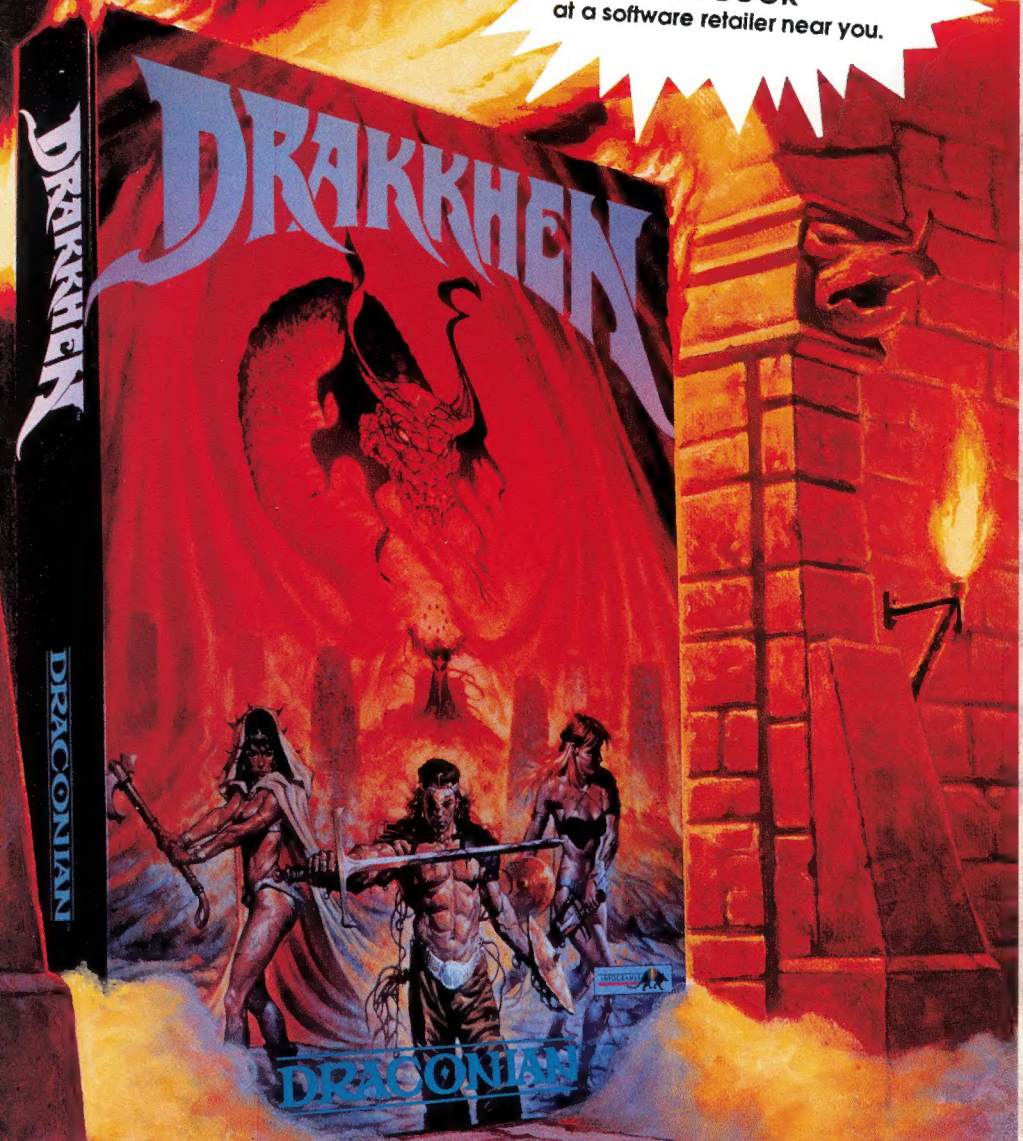

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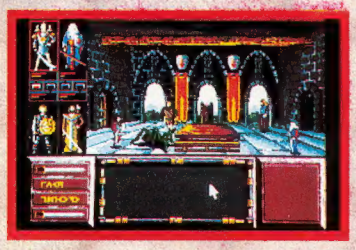

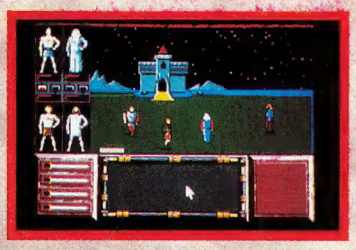

Dare to discover *Drakkhen*—the premier title in the Draconian line and the first role playing game that combines FRP themes with the most advanced technical wizardry ever!

You have been chosen to lead a hand-picked band of four brave adventurers on a treacherous journey. Your quest: to reclaim the mystical jewels from the eight dragon princes, resurrect the great dragon and restore the primeval realm—the source of all magic in the universe.

Never before has there been an adventure as vibrant with features as real as this:

- Three-dimensional graphics present a fantasy world in which you truly feel you're a part.
- "Real-time" environment renders life-like animation with independent character interaction.
- More than 150 unique monsters, ogres and dragons with over 200 on-screen magical spells.
- Personalized characters to match your own adventure style—be you scout, priest, magician or warrior!

Available for the IBM™/PC compatibles, Amiga™ and Atari ST™ Personal Computer.

DRACONIAN™

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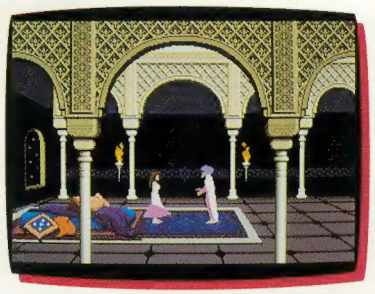
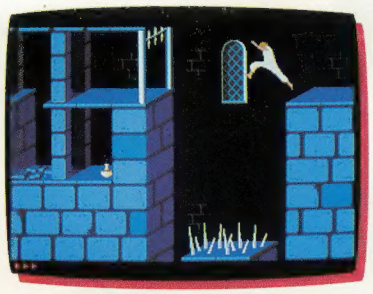
"You really have to see it to believe it."

Computer Entertainer

"Entertainment Program of the Year" Computer Entertainer



VGA SCREEN



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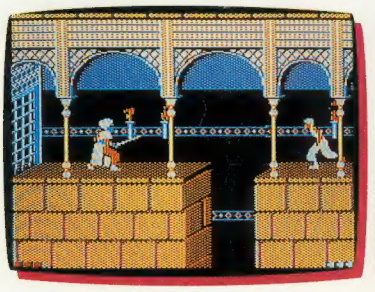
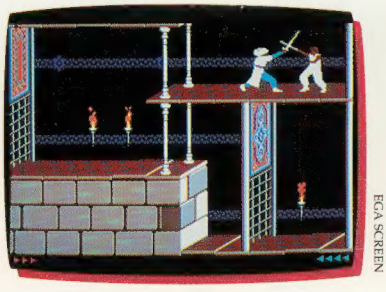
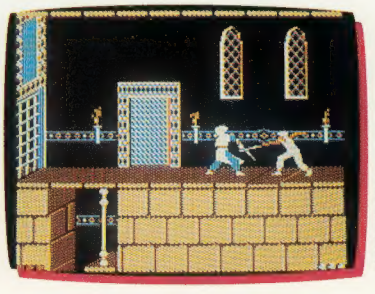


APPLE SCREEN



EGA SCREEN



APPLE SCREEN

It's like an Arabian nights movie come to life . . . with you as the star! In Prince of Persia, you'll plunge into an exotic world of challenging puzzles, tumultuous action and animation so fantastic it has reviewers reaching for superlatives:

"(★★★★/★★★★) Incredibly realistic. . . . The adventurer character actually looks human as he runs, jumps, climbs and hangs from ledges."

Computer Entertainer

"An unmitigated delight . . . comes as close to (perfection) as any arcade game has come in a long, long, long time . . . what makes this game so wonderful (am I gushing?) is that the little onscreen character does not move like a little onscreen character—he moves like a person."

Nibble

"Superb double-high-resolution graphics images and responsive, smooth animation work beautifully together to create an almost cinematic experience."

inCider/A+

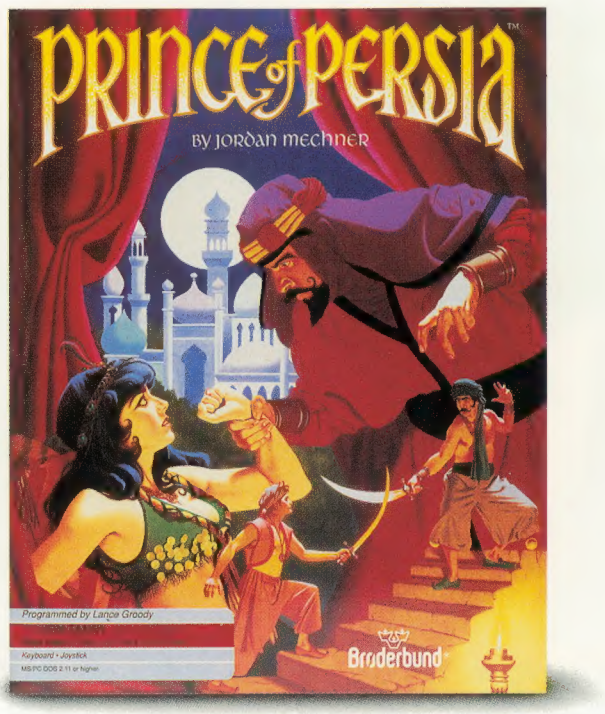
"A tremendous achievement . . . Mechner has crafted the smoothest animation ever seen in a game of this type.
"*Prince of Persia* is the *Star Wars* of its field."

Computer Gaming World

But don't take their word. You really *do* have to see it to believe it.

Available for IBM®/PC/Tandy® and 100% compatibles, Amiga® 500/1000*/2000/3000; Apple® IIe/IIc/IIc Plus/IIGS.

Suggested retail price: Apple, $34.95; IBM and Amiga,$39.95.



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